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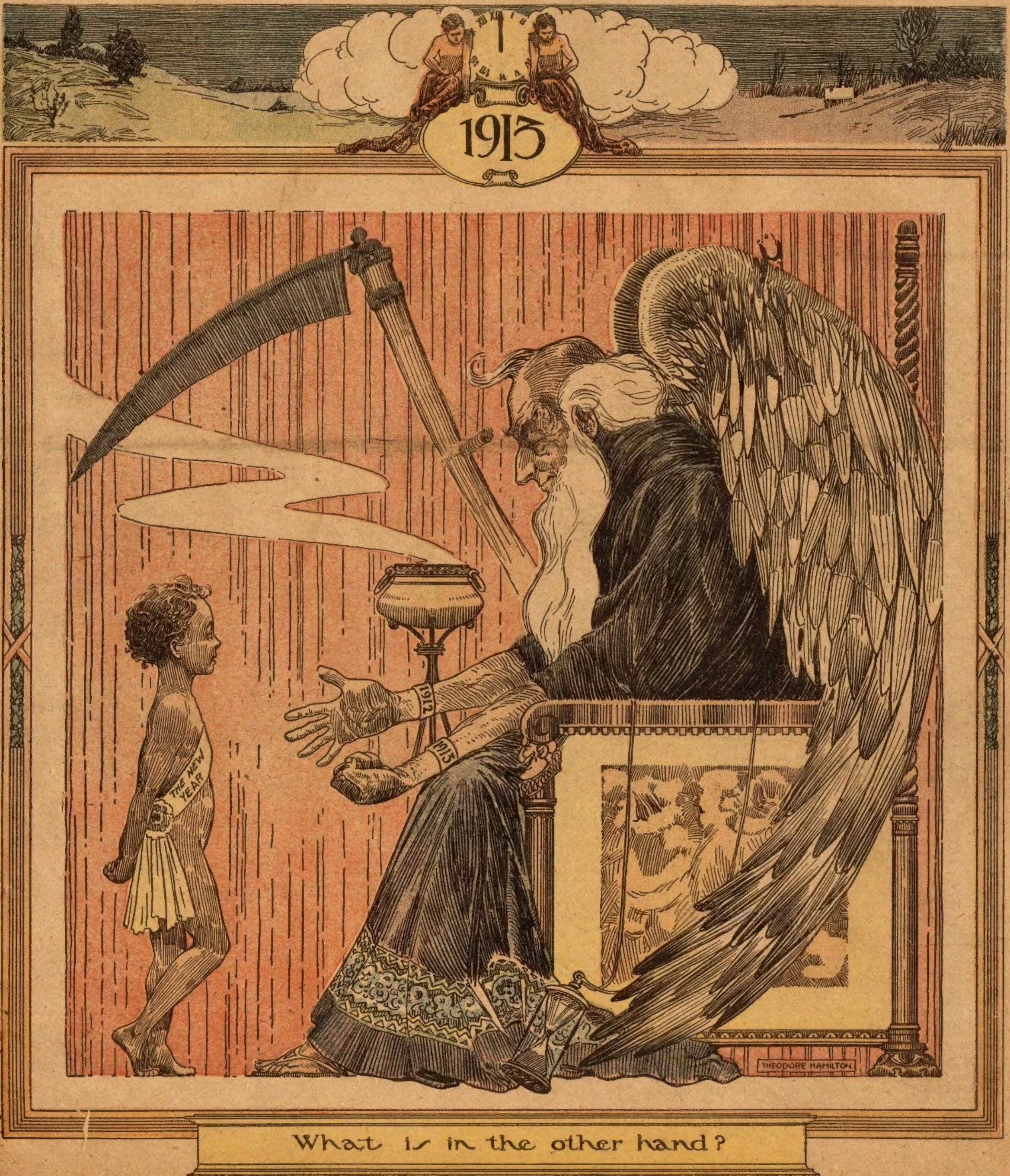
1913
THE NEW YEAR
1912
1913
THEODORE HAMILTON

What is in the other hand?

My Strange Christmas Journey

By CLARA PARKER

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PART II.

"THERE, there, that's enough!" said the fat lady tartly, as I swung her around till I was sure her throat and nostrils were cleared of the snow a little. "Can't you let a body breathe?" And with that she plumped down beside the young lady, who had sprung to her feet and would have come to help us if it hadn't all happened so quickly, owing to my presence of mind and the strength which made it so easy for me to handle the strangling woman.

"I don't think he meant to hurt you," I heard the dear little thing murmur to a muttered remark of the fat woman, who retorted:

"No matter what he meant. My head is spinning round and round like a top."

Little did she realize, poor clumsy thing, how near gone she was when I laid hold of her.

The man of the skull cap was bareheaded. It seemed a trifling thing to me, his losing his cap, for there could have been no special heat in the thing, but he made a serious matter of it. He asked us all, even me, if we had happened to see it.

I tried being a little jocose with him, for I thought, as I had with the seedsman: "Here we are, all flung in together in this plight. Why not make a joke of the matter? Nothing like taking a cheerful view of the matter."

"Oh, you won't have any difficulty finding your cap," I said cheerfully. "I don't suppose there is more than nine or ten feet of snow on top of it. I judge by the look of you that you struck the bank head first, as I did."

I wouldn't have expected to find two fellows without a particle of humor in them on the same train of cars.

"This is no time nor place for joking," snapped the surly creature, with an ugly, suspicious look at me.

One would have thought to hear him talk that we were in church listening to a sermon. There seemed to me so few places where it isn't one's duty to joke, but I began to think there were quite a number who didn't agree with me.

We had two bareheaded men in our party now. I should like to have suggested gayly, that they tie their handkerchiefs over their heads, but they seemed to take everything so ill of me that I concluded that it was best to take a more serious bearing with them at least.

The conductor was either lost in the snow bank, or had abandoned us to our fate. Anyway, he didn't show up again, so now the only thing for us to do was to strike off through the ever-increasing snow toward the light which was showing dimmer and dimmer through the dancing snowflakes.

"Everybody fall in," I called cheerfully, for I was determined that they should not down me among them.

By a common instinct, it seemed, the man who had worn the skull cap and the seedsman had drawn together at the end of the log, and my playful order to march and the movement I made set them the example; but the man of the skull cap leaned over and whispered something to the seedsman, which made him start as though the other had run a pin full length into him. I was standing close to them and saw it all.

"No!" shouted the seedsman.

"Yes!" cried the man of the skull cap, and then they both turned stealthily and looked up at me. I could make out the whites of their eyes turned on me, and felt for the moment a vile, outcast thing, as I saw the two fellows shudder and draw themselves apart as they looked at me.

However, there was no time for excitement, so I swallowed what could be nothing but morbid imagining on my part, and plunged through the snow to where the two ladies were sitting on the opposite end of the log. They had evidently anticipated my coming, for they had got upon their feet, and were trying to assure each other that the young girl could get along with the help of her fat friend.

"Silly old creature, and poor foolish child!" was the way I set them down in my mind, as I saw them gradually sinking into the snow about them, heard how the fat woman wheezed with every breath she drew, and saw how the delicate girl tottered on her injured foot.

"We will not need any help, sir," they cried out in chorus, as I brought up beside them, the fat woman carrying a loud, strident treble, while the dear child brought in the mildest second you could imagine.

It really was dreadful to keep on insulting and annoying people so that night, but it couldn't be helped, at least by me.

"Nonsense!" I said, genially, and to stop any further squeamishness on the fat woman's part, I caught up the girl and made off through the drifts, plowing them up in great clouds with my long legs and tramping feet, and finding it no joke to keep my head up straight with a girl in my arms who stiffened herself out like a piece of steel, and with first one of my legs and then the other dropping into holes two feet below its mate.

What under the heavens ailed those behind? Was something chasing them, or were they afraid of losing themselves in the dark? No sooner had I taken my first six steps than they came plunging after me like so many madmen, tearing up the snow and stumbling and snorting so in their hurry that they had no time to profit by my falls, but took them regularly behind me, one after another, like so many sheep in a row, in the same places I had fallen in.

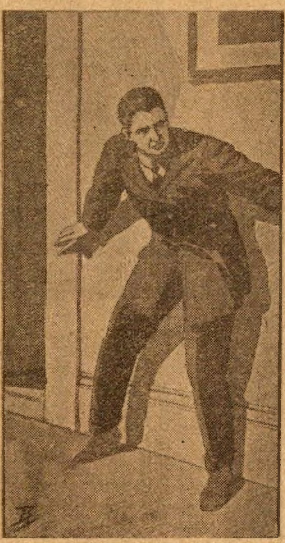
I judged that after the first few falls the fat woman became speechless, and next door to helpless, for I could see the two dragging her after them. I tried to shout to the poor things not to hurry so, and above all to let the woman have time to breathe. I knew they must be about played out, for the cries and shouts they sent after me—though I couldn't catch a word of what they said—had finally died out, and such a silent, noiseless run as it was, with the snow smothering our footsteps and only just enough breath left in our bodies to keep our feet moving under us.

I couldn't help wondering if the men behind knew whether the fat woman were breathing or not. Who could tell but that they were recklessly dragging a lifeless corpse along between them?

They would never make that fence. Yes, there they all were in a heap, on the right side of it, and here they came again, the fat woman still between them, but with no more sign of motion about her legs than though they were dragging a sack of meal between them.

"Look out, or you will kill her!" I tried to call back, but a mouthful of snow choking off the first of my warning, only the two words "kill her" were caught in a shriek by the wind, and went whistling back into the night and the confounded storm to those behind me.

They certainly hadn't caught my meaning, for as my shrill "kill her" went floating out through the darkness, the three seemed to urge themselves into a burst of speed quite beyond their power, or they struck a snag, for down they went again, all in a heap, as they always did. If it hadn't been for the burden in my arms, I should certainly have felt called upon to go back and help the poor things.



"We will bury him in the snow."

I cannot explain just how it was that my burden kept growing more and more precious to me, although the dear girl would not so much as rest the farthest outposts of the fluffy locks of her forehead against my shoulder.

Of course, it made it hard to carry her, but, great Scott! what did I care for that? Do you know I once told this story to a speculative chap, who asked me how much she weighed! Heaven help such a chap for a dried-up fossil! One might as well go to weighing the spring air which is pressing about him, or sizing up the sunbeams that are lifting the shadows from a dull day.

By George! but it did seem as though that light were trying the mirage business on us, playing it on us like a giddy firefly. I'll bet that to the poor wretches behind me, dragging that lumbering weight between them, it looked to be traveling away from them at the rate of forty miles an hour. We were beginning to corner it though, at last. Gradually the snow descended below my knees. We must have been burrowing through a sort of a hollow before, for I found now that I was beginning to climb.

I could see the lights from a number of windows. Evidently the house was a big one. It owned a watchdog, too, and here he came, with a bark in him like a brass band.

Now I had no fancy for having my trousers' legs ripped open by any such tramp exterminator, and before the belching volcano which was tearing down through the snow to meet us had got within reach of my boot toe, I was in a frame of mind toward him which—made the kick I gave him seem coarse and unfriendly.

At last I had found something which made the muscles of my dainty burden relax. A little cry of terror broke from her lips, and one small hand which she had been holding rigidly at her side flew to my coat sleeve. I never felt so elated before in my life, but I was too old a bird to scare off such timid advances.

"Let me put you right down here on this seat," I said cheerfully, placing her in an old-fashioned garden chair, half filled with snow, although it cut me to the heart to loosen that clinging touch.

A large, bloodthirsty dog is not to be overlooked under any circumstances, and that he might not catch me on the down grade, I sprang aside as he leaped at me in a cloud of snow, merely giving him a passing kick to discourage him from turning around again. I really thought he would, though, but perhaps my kick had been stronger than I wotted of. Anyway, he did not turn, but, with an angry yelp, added to his heavy chest notes, he shot down to meet the second party. It was very unfortunate, for, though prudent about dogs, I am not afraid of them. Apparently it was different with the others.

The noise and general confusion which broke out when that dog lit amongst them was the worst mixed-up mess I ever heard or looked at. One could have sworn that the seedsman and the man of the skull cap had grown into one, and that one was reaching with double-length legs for a hill to climb, while it seemed that the fat woman had grown front paws and was barking like a dog. As to the dog himself—well, he was the first dog I ever saw in veil and bonnet, yelling like mad for some one to come and help him.

I was down the hill like an avalanche, but where to take hold I couldn't seem to find out. Let me but reach for the poor fat woman's hands, and it was the dog's tail I got, so that he turned with a snarl to bite me; and when, with desperate hands, I clutched at his neck from behind, what did I make out to do but to throttle the fat woman, so that for the life of me I thought she would never fetch a breath again.

At length, as much from lack of mind as from anything done on my part, the dog went skulking off, and there devolved on me the delicate and difficult task of setting the fat woman upright. I pulled once too often on her to feel that she was solid ground to lift on. Who could tell but that she might give way in other places besides her hair? Take a cork limb, now. How should I feel to pull off a thing like that?

"Are you hurt, ma'am?" I asked meekly, merely to get the general direction of the top of her head.

Of course she was hurt, all mashed into the snow that way, and with no shape about her to offer the slightest clew for her to be gathered up by. Dear, dear! Would I never have done flinging affronts into the teeth of the poor, afflicted creature?

To my bewilderment, she sprang suddenly to her feet—bounced, though, is the word, if I may use it. Yes, I should have made a mistake if I had tackled her. Her head and not her feet had been pointing down hill. Dear me, how very uncomfortable she must have been!

"Am I hurt, young man?" she cried, in a withering voice. "Not at all, thank you! That could hardly be! My clothing is saturated with snow, my ear is bitten, and you hit me in the head, but I am not hurt. No, not in the least!"

Sneaky as I felt, and really sorry for the poor thing, I couldn't help speculating, as she sailed before me up the hill, how good a great deal of violent exercise would be for her. Why, she was getting as spry as a cricket with all her thrashing about.

"You see, I thought you were the dog," I called, apologetically, running to get along beside her.

Again she turned and gave me a bloodcurdling "thank you."

"Your compliment will long be remembered, sir," she said, and then we came along beside the chair where I had left the young girl, and stopped there.

The seedsman and the man with the skull cap had stopped there also. They had dissolved again, and now made two.

"I wish, gentlemen," said the fat woman, still in her mood of ghastly civility, "to thank you both for the assistance you rendered me relative to the dog. Also for dragging me ten feet at a time through snow banks, without giving my feet time to touch."

Then she turned her back on us, as on the whole sex, bending her entire attention on her young lady, whom she treated as though just snatched from the jaws of a blood-drinking tiger.

The house was so near now that it seemed foolish to waste time outside talking, so I lifted the girl in my arms again, though she recoiled from me still as though I were made of red-hot coals, and, leading the way, was followed in hot pursuit by the fat woman, the two men skulking along sheepishly in the rear.

The people in the house evidently hadn't heard the dog, of, if they had, he was given to such uproar and they did not heed him. Not a door opened, not so much as a curtain was lifted that his victims might be counted.

As I stepped upon the porch, or you might say into it, for there was a drift against the door as high as my knees, the ungrateful little thing in my arms moved so resolutely away from me that unless I was to seem too decided with her I must set her down.

"Your skirts will be such a muss," I pleaded, but with an indistinct murmur which meant a decided dismissal mixed up with civil thanks, she moved away from me over to the enemy. In other words she took the arm of the fat woman, which was held ostentatiously out to her.

Feeling more snubbed than I cared to think, I began thumbing about the door for bell buttons, running afoul an old-fashioned knocker, which went off in my hands like a fire alarm.

"By, George!" I muttered, dropping it as I would a viper, and then, with shame, I heard feet running down the passage.

"They've set it down for a telegram, I'll bet a dollar," I thought, miserably, and I was trying to pull on an insinuating smile when the door was jerked open suddenly in my face.

"It's no use. He's dead already," some one cried, and then jumped back at the sight of my face.

Mechanically our doleful party straggled into the light and heat. The seedsman, I think it was, softly slid the door to behind us, and there we huddled ourselves together, shamefaced and uninvited, the snow on our shoes, and things gradually melting and dripping down onto the neat light-colored carpet.

All I noticed about the house, in my embarrassment, was that we were standing in a large old-fashioned hall, my attention being naturally fastened on the person who stood regarding us in speechless amazement. It was a small man, well on in years, a person with a narrow soul, I felt willing to vouch. Already, even in his wonder, he had looked twice at the streams of water melting off my trousers legs. I felt that we couldn't conciliate him any too soon.

"I am sorry he is dead," I murmured, confusedly and then stopped.

Who was dead? Perhaps this man wasn't sorry at all. I should have done better to waive that point.

"We have just come from a railway accident," I added, cheerfully, by way of changing his thoughts.

The man looked us all over pitilessly one at a time, and I have never seen a more hangdog set than we men made under the unfeeling glare of his eye.

One might naturally have expected to be fussed over a bit, and asked how many had been killed, and so on. For all he knew we might be loaded with internal injuries. I had expected to see folks fly around at sight of us, trot out teas and things, rig us out in dry clothes—but there stood that little dumbhead eying us over as though we were a lot of cattle that had broken into his flowerbeds. I began to get mad.

"See here," I said, a little roughly, "those ladies have had enough of standing up. This young lady has sprained her ankle. Aren't there some women in this house that know what ought to be done for her?"

There, there, how hasty I was! I had forgotten the dead man might be his father perhaps. In that case he wasn't up for society.

"See here," I added again, argumentatively, drawing him to one side. "It's dreadful, I know, having death in the house, but you see we are obliged to trouble you. Just help the ladies out, and we fellows won't care. Got a wife, or sister, or something—any one to make these ladies comfortable?"

At that moment steps were heard outside upon the porch. A ring, somewhat more moderate than ours, sounded upon the bell, and the little man beside broke for the door, just as the seedsman in his confusion was about to open it. The two fought for the handle, the seedsman, under the meek impression that he was making himself useful, I think, and the little man, clawing like a tiger, with the plain desire to be the first to show himself.

The person outside was evidently an impatient soul, for hardly had the night latch been sprung than the door burst open, bunching the two men before it in its rush.

"Can he last an hour?" cried a voice from the depths of a hairy coat, and then, before decency could smooth him down, two mittened hands fought for the high collar of the coat, a dark-whiskered face peered about at our wretched little party, and the voice once more cried out, this time, "Who in the deuce are these?"

I struggled with my manhood, but no poor wretch, trundling his few rags up to the county poorhouse, ever felt a more degraded sense of dependence than I did at that moment.

It was so surprising, the attitude they took toward us, that our railway accident began to look like a very ordinary and trifling matter. It really began to seem like so paltry an excuse for troubling people, just a personal matter, you know—nothing for which to claim notice from the public.

"They say their car tumbled off the track," said the little man, coldly, as though it were a matter he thought we might have lied about, and then he and the newcomer withdrew into a corner and conversed together in guarded whispers.

It was plain that our coming was dreadfully inopportune. Yes, we were always forgetting that dead man.

In the meantime the ladies should not stand there any longer, and swallowing my beggarly feelings as best I could, I resolutely advanced on a couple of heavy hall chairs, and advanced with them to where the ladies had withdrawn themselves into a far corner of the hall.

The daring of this act seemed, at last, to rouse some sense of decency in those who had appeared utterly to have forgotten our presence in their whispering.

"The ladies can come with me," exclaimed the little man, nervously taking the chairs from my hand and setting them back accurately in their places. "Come, ladies, I will see to you gentlemen's wants a little later."

The fat woman started readily enough to follow him, but as I sprang forward to offer my help to the young lady, I found her pale and trembling.

"Oh, do ask him to leave us all together!" as though the words were wrung from her by sheer terror. "That horrid dead man, you know, and everything else so queer! Oh, I just can't stand it."

"What's that you say, Bessie?" asked the fat woman, sharply, but I scarcely heard her.

Wasn't I up in the stars in my conceit and gratitude? At last I was breaking down the iron reserve of the well-brought-up little maiden. She was learning to trust me, bless her heart, and to lean on me as well. Let the old party growl and snort now as she liked; I wasn't going to be held off at arm's length a minute longer.

"I shall have to assist this young lady. She has sprained her ankle," I said politely to the little fellow. "You just lead the way, and we will follow," and with that I couldn't refrain from a meaning smile at the dear girl, just to show her how clever I was in inventing a scheme for keeping near her.

Pshaw! I kept forgetting how modest and timid she was. A blush the color of a brilliant sunset covered her face, and brought me back again with a bump to my ordinary senses. Try how I might, each way I turned that night seemed to heap fresh disgrace upon me. Every one was free to snub me. Even the matter of my offering help to the dear girl with her poor foot worked badly against me.

The little man glared at me, the fat woman did the same, and all that the silly child yielded to me, though it was plain that each step made her wince with pain, was that she took my arm on one side, while her fat friend made a crutch of herself for the other.

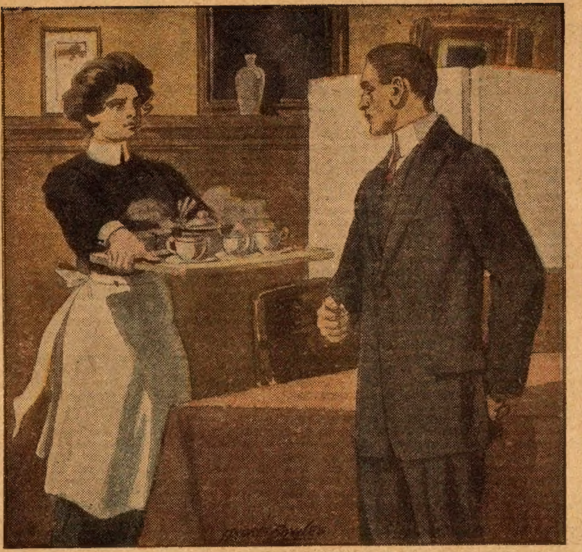
The man with the hairy overcoat had hurried out of sight, and now the little man, marching ahead, soon opened a door at the end of the hall, in front of which he stood as though guarding it from an invading enemy.

"The ladies in here," he said, pointedly, as we reached his side, and all that I could do with the lot of them in combination against me was to send one hasty glance inside, and then back off, and let the ladies pass inside and shut the door after them.

It seemed to be a fairly comfortable room, a little on the barn order, but warm and neat enough, and, thank Heaven, a woman appeared at last! As we turned away, I heard a swish of skirts, and saw a very respectable woman pass through the door which had just shut in our faces.

"Now, sir," said the little man, austerely, as though I had done something to be ashamed of and he was going to thrash me for it, "I will attend to you gentlemen."

I think I might have plucked up some spirit if it hadn't been for the bearing of my two companions toward me. Not a sociable word or friendly glance could I get out of them. Well, why should I give a darn? Of course I didn't like it though. No one with a grain of sociability in him would have liked to have such a surly-looking pair around with him.



"They told me there was three men here."

Like three tramps filing to the lockup, we marched behind the little chap into another barnlike room, with a table in it—a fire, too—and to this we flocked, the steam rising off from us as from so many washtubs.

How we should have been pitied and fussed over. And yet I tried to be just. That dead man, you know, how could we tell but that the father of a family, a gifted genius, a beloved husband, had been nipped off in some untimely fashion? I really began wondering that there wasn't more commotion.

"Poor soul," I thought comfortably, as the heat from the stove began drawing the shivers from my back, "lots of cold duffers about him. Awful to drop off in that way."

"I wonder what he died of?" I added aloud, turning to the two who were cowering and shaking on the other side of the stove from me.

The little man had left us, and now we might have talked, but the fools! Whatever could ail them? Just as fast as I moved to get my eyes upon them, just so much faster did they move away, always keeping the full body of the stove between us. It was too much—I was bound to break out somewhere.

"Are you afraid of me?" I cried out angrily, with a long stride toward them, which brought me upon their heels before they had time to calculate upon my sudden impulse.

By George! What could be the matter with me? They cowered before me like whipped curs. Shame and bewilderment sent the sweat out upon me. Reaching for my handkerchief, I absently jerked something else out upon the floor. Great Heavens! There lay the false whiskers and goggles, sprawling in plain sight before me. In my other excitements I had completely forgotten the things.

Bewilderment and shame knocked my common sense cold for a moment. Then was the time for me to show my indifference for the stuff, but what did I do? Just what the knave they belonged to might have done, providing he had been the fool I was. Down I went on all fours, and began scrambling the stuff into my pocket again, as though a troop of mounted police were at my back. Once I had them safe, reason came back, and I looked sheepishly around me.

What a relief! I was alone—alone—but why? There was the sting. Through which one of the doors had the pair of fools made their retreat? How I longed to catch them by their silly necks and bump some common sense into those silly heads of theirs!

A cross-looking girl came in at that moment through a swing door. She had three cups of coffee on a tray and some bread and fixings. She seemed much put out to find only me.

"They told me there was three men here," she said, doggedly, as though I were haggling over the matter with her, and with that she set down the tray and made off before I had plucked up spirit to ask a question of her.

I have heard how the bread of dependence sticks in one's throat, but I declare I wouldn't have supposed the state of one's mind could so affect the taste of one's victuals.

I didn't sit down at the table. Somehow I didn't seem to feel privileged to make so free, and from time to time I caught myself looking sheepishly about, while I choked down chunks of bread and meat, as I have seen men at soup houses do, or tramps at kitchen doors.

I braced up manhood enough, though, to clear out two cups of coffee, and then a bright thought struck me: I would get to an outside door and fling those whiskers and goggles as far out as I could send them.

I was perfectly sure I knew which door led into the hall, and opened it, only to find myself in a small passage, with two rooms opening off from it. The door to one was ajar, and through it I heard men's voices coming.

"We will bury him in the snow," one voice said. I think it was the man with the hairy coat that was speaking, and then came the voice of the little man, in perfectly indifferent tones.

"Yes, that will do for a time," he said, "it's deep in the hollow," and then a door opened behind and stopped them.

I was filled with horror! Not any common death here! Murder was in the wind, or why this unseemly haste? Was I, a decent citizen, to stand by and see a thing like this carried on without making a sign? My first move in detection of them must be one of caution.

Who were those creeping into the room from which the voices had come? My eye to the crack showed them to be my wretched companions in the car accident. I should have stayed to listen to what they had to say, but they were on the scent for just such mischief.

"We would like a word with the gentleman of the house," faltered the man of the skull cap. "A private word," added the seedsman, and then they turned, as though by common consent, and glared at the door behind which I was crouching.

Back I slid into the room from which I had come, as quiet as any mouse, and none too soon. I heard the door bang, through which I had been peering, and once more I was alone, in the silent room, with a quickly beating heart.

Minutes passed that could have been used to good effect by a cool-headed chap, and still I stood there in a sort of a daze. Those two doughheads mixed up with me in the car accident were in that room there blackening my character in some mysterious way. I hadn't the shadow of a doubt; yet, with two against one, what was I to do about it? Of course, it didn't matter so long as they confined their work to the man of the house, but there was the fat woman, only waiting for a tangible slur against me to pounce upon. Who could tell what control she might have over the dear little girl who was filling my whole mind?

It really seemed as though I must have taken the real thing at last. I confessed slight attacks before, but now, even with my other perplexities taking up a great deal of my attention, I still found the memory of the sweet young girl haunting me in the most amazing fashion.

But there was that poor dead man! In the name of decency I must give some time and thought to him. I never was an over-sensitive person, but I had been a well-brought-up young man, and such irregular things seemed horrible to me.

The conclusion of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

Probably Adam never forgot his first New Year's Eve.

THE TREASURY.

Mr. Caulker, sitting comfortably back in his easy chair, turned over the pages of a volume which he had found at the back of a bookshelf.

"Ah, Mrs. Caulker," he said, "they don't print books like this any more. I remember this old book well. It was given me in my happy boyhood days. Little did I appreciate it then. Little did I anticipate the happy hours I would spend in poring over its interesting pages. Why has it been hidden so long at the back of that bookshelf, Mrs. Caulker? Why have you kept it away from me so long?"

Mrs. Caulker sniffed and wouldn't even deign a reply.

"Yes!" cried Mr. Caulker. "Yes! that's always the way in this house! If a book isn't of any use I find it everywhere—on the center table, on the piano, in my chair, on my bureau, on the floor. But if the book is really interesting—really helpful—I find it hidden at the back of an old bookshelf and it is only by a fortunate accident that I happen to find it at all."

"What are you talking so much about?" asked Mrs. Caulker. "What book is it? Land o' Goshen, I never heard such a man!"

"What book is it?" demanded Mr. Caulker. "It's the 'Treasury of Facts and Useful Knowledge,' madam, written and compiled by Josiah R. Hedge and Petronius Crane and copiously illustrated with woodcuts. Did you know," he said, consulting the Treasury, "that 'Hubert' means 'bright in spirit or soul!'"

Mr. Caulker's name was Hubert.

"Did you know," he continued, "that the earth's surface (exclusive of the oceans) is composed of 51,238,800 square miles?"

She didn't say anything.

"Did you know," demanded Mr. Caulker, "that the greatest depth of the Atlantic Ocean is 27,266 feet, and that the highest mountain in the world is 29,002 feet high?"

She pinched a cushion out of its flatness and set it against the back of a chair.

"Did you know," he continued, frowning out of the Treasury, "that a kilometer is 3,280 feet and 10 inches?"

Mrs. Caulker picked up the paper from the floor, folded it together and slapped it down upon the table.

"Or that the time in Calcutta is 10 hours and 40 minutes later than in New York?"

She picked up his tobacco pouch and slapped it down upon the paper.

"Did you know," demanded Mr. Caulker, "that in the language of flowers the fern stands for fascination?"

She picked up his ash receiver from the table and hurried into the kitchen with it.

"Or that the rose stand for love?" he shouted through the kitchen door.

She appeared with the dustpan and handbrush and began sweeping up the tobacco ashes which had fallen around his chair.

"Now here's an interesting question," he continued. "Does it take more pickets to build over a hill than on a level?"

She rapped his ankles with the handbrush, and he lifted his feet off the floor so that she could sweep underneath them.

"Mrs. Caulker," he demanded, "could you make a curve with a set triangle?"

She went on sweeping.

"Mrs. Caulker," he said, putting his feet down in a tentative sort of way and immediately receiving a shrewd crack on the ankle, "Mrs. Caulker," he said, speaking with dignity, but hastily lifting his feet again, "do you know how to measure ear corn in a crib?"

"No!" she cried, suddenly rising and facing him, with the handbrush in one hand and the dustpan in the other. "No! I do not! But do you know that I need some wood splitting and some coal carried up? And do you know that I need a new silk petticoat and a new hat and that Willy needs new shoes, and that the linoleum in the kitchen is all worn out and that the kitchen range needs fixing?"

And as for Mr. Caulker, he looked at his wife and saw that all the storm signals were set and flapping wildly in the gale.

"Did you say you need some wood cut, my dear?" he asked.

"Yes, I did! And when you want a treasury of facts and useful knowledge after this, you come to me. I can tell you facts and useful knowledge well worth knowing!"

"Very well, my dear," said Mr. Caulker, arising and giving the soft answer which turneth away wrath. And as he hurried down into the cellar he thought to himself, "She seems to have the facts, all right. I guess I'll stick to the woodcuts!"

* * *

Gave Him Warning.

Western Judge—"Why did you kill Long Jack?"

Hair-trigger Ike—"He was a bad man, y'r honor, an' it was a case o' chaw or be chawed."

Judge—"Did you give him any warning before you shot him?"

Hair-trigger Ike—"Oh, yes, y'r honor. I told him to hold up his hands."

The Vanished Captain

Or, THE STOLEN RED EYE .:.:.:.: By FRANK E. CHANNON

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CHAPTER XV.

DOUBLES ON HIS TRACKS.

WHEN Mr. Charrington came bustling into the cottage just after seven, he found Mr. Bibbs up and engaged in a minute search of the receptionroom, with Stamford acting as guide.

"Late; sorry," admitted the old jurist. "By Jove! I simply could not get up when that nigger called me; my old bones are not used to such work as that of yesterday. A few more such experiences and I should be fit, though. Well, what's doing, Bibbs, anything?"

"Lots," replied the detective, laconically.

The eyebrows of the Judge were elevated. "What's the program, then?" he questioned.

"We're all ready, sir, and here they come; I've been using Mr. Hamilton's butler as a messenger boy."

The deputy-sheriff, Alf Green, and two men were just entering the cottage, armed and accoutered. Mr. Charrington glanced toward them. "What is it?" he demanded. "Another chase like that of yesterday?"

"We're going to start right away," announced Mr. Bibbs, in a loud voice, and then he whispered in the Judge's ear: "A word with you first, sir," and, drawing the old gentleman aside, he spoke rapidly and earnestly, in a low tone.

At the first sentence the Judge drew himself up and looked inquiringly into the detective's face. The little man nodded, and resumed his emphatic whisper. Once or twice that surprised look spread across his listener's face, but the detective always glared it down, and presently, with a gesture that showed conversion, Mr. Charrington turned towards the waiting men in the hall:

"Now, boys," he called aloud, "if you're all ready, we'll start at once."

There was a general movement toward the outside, and in another minute the entire party, accompanied by the detective, who had hastily made himself ready, started off down the hillside over the course taken on the preceding day.

Mr. Bibbs appeared to be merry and gay, garrulous and joking, and it was not until they entered the dark wood on the opposite side of the ravine that his manner suddenly changed. He waved his hand and nodded to Mr. Charrington, who continued on with the searchers, while young Stamford and the detective seated themselves and patiently waited until the sound of their footsteps had died away; then Mr. Bibbs clutched his companion by the shoulder, and whispered almost fiercely, "Now, then, sir, do just as I say." Stamford's only answer was a curt nod, and slowly, cautiously, almost on tiptoes the two retraced their steps.

They retraced them until they arrived at the edge of the trees, where they halted again, and craftily, very craftily, Mr. Bibbs peered out from the concealment. Across the vale the cottage was plainly visible, looming white and plain in the clear morning light. Not a soul was in sight; scarcely a sound was to be heard. Only the hoot of some distant locomotive disturbed the stillness. Still the little man was apparently unsatisfied. His small, ferrety eyes glanced sharply, quickly, almost feverishly from left to right, gradually increasing their range until they swept the landscape from north to south; while his companion lay motionless at his side, following the detective's slightest movement with keen interest. Presently Mr. Bibbs muttered: "Now, then, sir, you lead," and at once Stamford crawled slowly forward, still remaining under cover of the trees, Mr. Bibbs close at his heels.

The two crept along cautiously, until a small water course obstructed their path, when the young man motioned to his companion, and then slid down into the icy waters. They reached only to his knees, but the concealment from the banks on either side was perfect. Next instant Mr. Bibbs had followed him.

Now, as rapidly as possible, the two waded forward, struggling along as best they were able, clinging to the shrubs and branches for support, and slipping and sliding on the rocky bed of the little streamlet. At the bottom of the hill they climbed out, drawing themselves up and lying listening and watching with alert interest.

At the summit of the succeeding hill stood the cottage, and as they watched, they saw Peter's bent form come to the doorway, and then disappear a moment later inside. They heard the slam of the door, and as the sound was borne to them across the vale, Mr. Bibbs' forefinger went up slowly, as a signal to stay. The stay was only just long enough, however, for him to get a comprehensive look around, and in another minute the upward wriggle was resumed.

The detective's every effort was now being made to get back unseen inside of the cottage from whence he had but a short time before departed. By a circuitous route he crawled up, with Stamford still wriggling along in his rear. At last they gained the entrance to the garden patch in the back, and there again lay listening and watching from the shelter of the fence.

Inside the cottage all appeared to be quiet. Not a sound was to be heard around them but the chirp of some ambitious sparrows. The morning was cold and frosty, the atmosphere exaggerating every sound, and Mr. Bibbs glanced with an aggrieved expression at the offending birds; their twitter appeared to annoy him.

Now, edging off slowly toward the right, the detective and his companion crawled along until they were opposite the extreme east end of the cottage, where a small summer kitchen had been built within the last year. Evidently the detective contemplated reaching this structure, for he motioned silently for his companion to get in closer. Like two cats they crawled on, until only the short space of the driveway separated them from the outhouse. To cross this, they would be compelled to leave the sheltering protection of the garden hedge, and expose their movements to any prying eyes.

The detective kept his eyes glued to the single window in the kitchen, lying perfectly motionless, apparently utterly oblivious to the intense cold. Two minutes passed, three, five, and still there was no indication of advance. Then the bent figure of the butler passed across the window. Still no sign came from the detective. Again Peter's form crossed the line of vision. This seemed to settle all doubts in Mr. Bibb's mind, for now his hand was raised with all fingers outspread, and the two settled themselves down as if for a long wait.

Fifteen minutes passed—fifteen minutes of utter uneventfulness, and then again Peter's form darkened the window. This time he sauntered slowly past, and instantaneously the detective's foot nudged his companion, who lay sprawled at his heels, and who now became keenly attentive. Each was aware of the sound of a closing door; the sound came from the further side of the cottage, and at once Mr. Bibbs crawled slowly across the driveway, with Stamford almost touching him. At the further end of the summer kitchen was a small aperture cut close to the ground, with a sliding lid suspended above it. It had been cut for Siguford's convenience, so that he might enter or go out at any time during the night. Into the comparatively small hole Mr. Bibbs squeezed his round, fat little body, and was lost to view; Stamford immediately following him.

Once inside, and clutching the young Englishman, as he crawled in after him, the detective arose to his feet, and side by side stood the oddly-matched pair. Only for a brief moment did they wait, and then, with quick, noiseless steps, they glided from the little room and entered the buffet kitchen. Peter's seared and troubled face gazed up at them with unsurprised expression. Mr. Bibbs' forefinger came smartly to his lips, in a command for silence, and as mutely the butler pointed through the swinging door toward the front hall. With a gesture that plainly said: "Get thee behind me," Mr. Bibbs resumed his advance, with Peter now tottering along in the rear.

As they entered the hall, the three were plainly aware of a soft, rustling sound above them. Without a moment's hesitation, Mr. Bibbs commenced to crawl on hands and knees up the stairs. Once his hand stole, with searching fingers towards his hip pocket, and Stamford, watching alertly the man before him, unconsciously made the same movement, while old Peter, close at his heels, moistened his lips in his peculiar, nervous manner, and crawled yet closer after his master.

As the trio advanced step by step, the rustling from above became more and more pronounced, and Mr. Bibbs' features became more and yet more wrinkled, until his face had assumed that bulldog expression that seemed to fit so well his short, fat little body. Stamford's jaws were tightly locked, and Peter was still assiduously licking his lips, but into his eyes had crept a new expression—the expression of a man who expects the worst and has made up his mind for it. Poor old Peter was prepared to die, if necessary, but he intended to die fighting, and die hard.

The detective's head was level with the topmost step, and his little eyes took in a comprehensive glance of the landing. The door immediately in front of him—young Stamford's chamber door—was closed, but the Captain's door was ajar, and from that room proceeded the strange rustling noise. Once Mr. Bibbs' nose was elevated, as if scenting something, and he glanced sharply back to make sure he was being followed. A wink from Stamford's steely gray eyes told him all he wished to know, and Peter's fearful, desperate face, peeping over the top of his master's shoulders, assured him that the butler was nerved up to the last supreme effort.

It was eight good feet from the topmost step to the door of the Captain's bedroom, and the detective made it in a single bound, short, fat little man though he was; indeed, it appeared that he scarcely braced himself for the spring. With a thud, he landed clear up against the door.

Some unseen force from behind endeavored to slam it on him, but his advantageously-placed boot blocked that. Stamford, not slow in coming into action, was right with him, and under their united weight the door gave way and swung back with a crash, disclosing the interior of the chamber, clear and sharp, in the cold, gray morning light. From the ceiling came a cold draft of air from the open trapdoor. There was small time to take note of these details.

A brown, white-hooded face peered for a brief second from behind the door, but the next instant face, hood, and form were sent spinning across the room under the force of a drive from the detective's knotted fist, and lay crumpled up in a heap against the chest of drawers on the further side.

"Quit your game or I'll pump lead into you!" snorted the little man, his hands diving into his pockets and producing a pair of ugly-looking revolvers, as he covered, a copper-colored face that peered around from the back of the closet door on the other side of the bed. The face was instantly withdrawn, and a report, a crash, a splintering of woodwork, told that Mr. Bibbs was as good as his word. As the echo of the report died away, there arose yet another figure, brown-faced, white-robed as the others. From its position at the other end of the room, it pointed one lean, commanding finger at the detective and his two companions, and clear and sharp, as if the words were cut from solid ice, it issued the command:

"Put away your pistol. Lead cannot harm us!"

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ALL DAY SESSION.

It was an intensely dramatic moment. The inert, unconscious form, bundled up in a heap in the corner, where the detective's fist had stretched it. The split and shattered door on his right giving evidence of his shot; the detective, bull-necked, short of stature, standing there with the two revolvers in his hands, while from behind peered young Stamford and the nearly-crazed butler. In front, that slim, delicate, cool, commanding figure.

For a full ten momentous seconds that silence reigned in the room. Mr. Bibbs neither spoke nor moved. He seemed to be wrestling with some unseen opponent. The veins in his forehead swelled out until they threatened to burst, and his little ferrety eyes never left the tip of that outstretched finger. Neither did the young Englishman or Peter offer to move. The white-robed figure did not alter its position, but from it proceeded these words:

"You cannot move. You are unable to——"

With a mighty effort, as if he were casting off from him a load of binding chains, the detective sprang forward:

"Can't, eh?" he roared. "Can't, eh?" he roared yet louder, as if challenging any one to contradict. "Who says I can't? On him, Hamilton—on him, sir! Down with him! Down with the bugger! Hold him!"

Like a man awakening from sleep, young Stamford started and then sprang forward, while Peter, wild with terror, and utterly past caring for all consequences, outstripped even his master and hurled his withered old frame upon that ghostly form.

"Got yer! Got yer, yer bloody devil!" he screamed. "W'ere's me master? W'ere's the Captain? Wot yer done with 'im?" In a frenzy, his shriveled old hands encircled the neck of the intruder, as he sought to choke him; but Stamford had leaped to his side.

"Leave him to me," he growled, and the old servant, panting with his exertions, reeled back, just as Mr. Bibbs flung himself upon the thing that was lurking behind the door. "Watch that chap in the corner, Peter!" he yelled, as the form he had stretched there showed some signs of rousing, and the butler leaped upon the prostrate figure.

It was a short, fierce struggle. In both instances the two white men were superior in strength and fighting power to their brown opponents, and the issue was never in doubt. Stamford had mastered his opponent with two well-placed, short-armed jolts, and the detective's arms encircled his man like a living vise, until the fellow yelled in agony. Then Mr. Bibbs dropped him, and he fell like a lump of clay.

"Don't hit him no more, sir!" he shouted to Stamford, who was still pounding his opponent, and at the words the Englishman drew back, almost ashamed that he had struck so frail-looking a man.

"Now, then," commanded Mr. Bibbs, sternly, as he lifted the battered man to his feet, "tell us, and damn quick, too, where is the Captain?"

With a shudder of repulsion, the frail man endeavored to release himself. "Touch me not, oh, eater of flesh!" he groaned.

"You don't get away till you speaks up," growled the detective, tightening his hold. "Now, then, out with it!" With each command the little man tightened his grip upon his victim, twisting the thin arms until the brown man groaned in pain as the vise-like pressure increased.

"The—big—sahib——" he panted, and then stopped.

"Go on!" roared the infuriated little man. "Go on! What of him?"

"The big—sahib—is—is—not in—not in the—flesh."

"You're a liar!" flatly contradicted Mr. Bibbs, giving a mighty wrench, as he uttered the last word.

His prisoner screamed in agony.

"Where? Where, then?" persisted the detective. "You won't be in the flesh long if you don't spit it out."

"W'ere's me master? W'ere's me master?" screamed old Peter, from his position astride of his captive.

"Shut your mug up!" commanded the detective, sharply. "I'm running this show." Then placing the cold muzzle of his revolver against the temple of the prostrate man: "Shell out what you know, or out go your brains!" he growled, and his features looked more like some fiend's as he threatened.

"Then—of—of a surety is—is the big sahib lost—lost—for—forever," moaned the man, brokenly. "I speak the—the truth, oh brother. He is—is not in—in the flesh."

"'Ave yer killed 'im, yer bloody devil?" shrieked the butler, almost beside himself with fear and rage.

"Shut up!" again came the curt command from the detective. Then, looking straight into his prisoner's eyes. "You must produce him," he insisted, quietly, with a meaning glance at the leveled revolver.

The brown man shivered and trembled a little. "How can I, oh, fat sahib?" he pleaded.

"Never mind my shape; you shell up with the skipper," growled Mr. Bibbs.

"His body, indeed, can I show you, but—but his spirit is far—far away. He is not——"

"I want 'em both in the same package, or it'll go hard with you, Mister Yellowface," threatened the torturer. "Now, then, we'll go in session right here. I think I tumble to your game. You're head cook, and you'll make the meal; understand, my friend? Mr. Hamilton, you and Peter take those two gents away; tie 'em up in the smokehouse, and see they don't get away from you. This chap and me'll have fifteen minutes of quietness."

For a moment Stamford hesitated, but a reassuring nod from Mr. Bibbs told him that all was well, and he and Peter led away the two prisoners, leaving the detective and his captive alone.

"Now, get busy," commanded Mr. Bibbs, as the door closed upon them. "You sit there," and he forced his prisoner into a chair, "and keep your eye on the muzzle of this shooting iron. Now, concentrate, that's what you call it, isn't it, my friend? Concentrate for all you're worth; you never hung on a thinner branch than you're doing now. This gun has a hair trigger, and I'm mighty nervous from loss of sleep, and things is dead sure to happen if the Captain—body and spirit—don't arrive in the same package right smartly."

"Accursed flesh-eater of an accursed race——" began the man, but Mr. Bibbs stopped him with a gruff: "Here now, stop all that! Never mind me diet; it's good enough for me, and you don't have to eat it."

"Know, then," resumed the man, "that I am but the servant of my masters; but the mouth of those that sent me. How, then, can I——"

"Oh, come, that won't do! Work according to business rules," complained the detective.

"A covenant may be made whereby for the return of the great Eye, the big sahib may also be returned," suggested the prisoner.

"That's for the Captain to talk with you about after he's here," promptly announced Mr. Bibbs. "I know nothing about that business; that's between you and the skipper. Look here, Mister Yellowface, when a man's got both shoulders touching the mat, it ain't for him to talk about terms—the fall's against him, see?"

"Your speech is as of a cry that cometh from afar; it may not be understood," complained the captive.

"Gosh!" exploded Mr. Bibbs. "That's the first time any man's ever said he couldn't understand me. Look here, I want this Captain, I want this big sahib; I want him bad, and I want him now. Pony up! There, do you understand that?"

A battle of eyes followed this announcement, but during it, Mr. Bibbs never lowered the point of his revolver. Presently the eyes of the brown man fell, and his lips slowly formed the words: "I go to commune with those who sent me."

"Make a quick trip of it," advised the detective.

Then silence reigned in the chamber.

The trip was apparently a longer one than Mr. Bibbs could have wished, for an hour passed, and still the brown man remained deep in slumber. Once Mr. Bibbs arose and stole over to him. He placed his ear to his breast and listened attentively. Not the slightest quiver gave any indication that the man was alive. His face was gray, his body almost cold, but not the slightest effort to awaken him did the detective make. The minutes fled, and still the uncanny scene continued, Mr. Bibbs still keenly alert, and his captive, to all appearance, a corpse.

Noon had chimed out from Reeves Church, when, with a slight shudder, the unconscious man awoke. Mr. Bibbs nodded pleasantly.

"Still here," he grinned. "Had a pleasant trip?"

The brown man made no reply, and for a long five minutes the two sat watching each other. Then slowly came the words:

"At midnight the large sahib shall come, but only thou, oh, fat man, thou and I must be here, for so is it ordered."

The speech was chanted more than spoken, and Mr. Bibbs at once acquiesced, with a brisk: "That suits me all right, but why, my friend, do you persist in rubbing into me the fact that I am fat. Do you think I don't know it?" There was a momentary pause, and then the detective invited kindly: "Would you like something to eat; it's a long time between now and midnight."

An expression of disgust swept across the prisoner's face, and he shook his head. Then, slowly, he arose, as if to depart. Mr. Bibbs was at once keenly interested. "Oh, no, no!" he growled. "We'll spend the interval sitting, if you please. There's no use in tiring ourselves. Sit down again, Mr. Sorrowful-eyes, and I'll just explain to the gentlemen outside how things stand," and forthwith the little man commenced a vigorous stamping, every jar of which seemed to jar the delicate frame of the sitting prisoner, who appeared to be in a highly nervous condition.

In a few moments Peter's haggard face appeared in the door. "Did you call, sir?" he inquired.

"What's doing outside?" demanded Mr. Bibbs.

"They're both hout hin the smoke'ouse, sir, hand the Judge his just a-coming back—the Judge hand the rest of 'em, sir."

"That's all right," growled the detective, apparently well satisfied. You ask the sheriff and his boys to keep a sharp lookout for the two gentlemen, Peter,' and then ask the Judge and Mr. Hamilton to come up here to me."

"Yes, sir," and with another glance at the still form of the man sitting in the chair, the butler crept from the room.

In three or four minutes the loud approach of the heavy-footed Judge, followed by Stamford, was heard, and they entered the room.

"Well, well," began Mr. Charrington, boisterously, "so you got 'em, did you, Bibbs? Right smart of you now, right smart——" but Mr. Bibbs held up his hand in a plea for silence. "Not too much noise, Judge, if you please. This gentleman is in a nervous state of health, as you might say! he ain't in the best of condition—things are working out just as I expected," he added in an undertone, and the old Virginian glanced with keenly interested eyes at the captive.

"Well, well," he repeated, in subdued tones, "I confess it is a little beyond me so far, but your calculations appear to be coming out all right. What's the next move?"

"The next more, sir," announced Mr. Bibbs, with a grin, "is to sit still and wait. There'll be nothing doing according to the program until midnight, so if you'll have the boys keep themselves handly and ready, and make as little noise as possible, that's all I'll ask, that and a quick delivery in this room of three or four bottles of Bass' ale and a cut from the Captain's Cheddar cheese. My friend here insists he's not hungry, but I confess that I'm pretty close to the starving line.

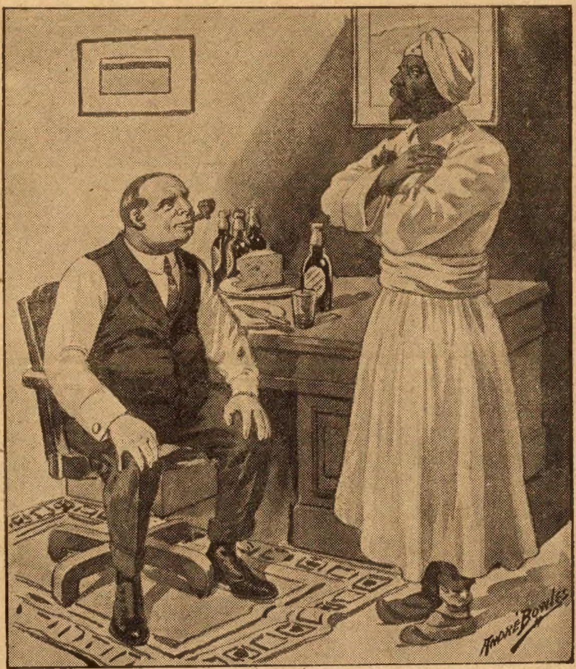
CHAPTER XVII.
THE RED EYE.

The day passed slowly, very slowly for all concerned. Mr. Bibbs locked himself in the chamber in company with his prisoner, and consoled himself with hourly refreshments from the Captain's imported ale. "Frequent but small doses, as recommended by all doctors," he muttered to himself, with a cheerful grin. Then, looking towards his prisoner: "It's too bad, my friend, that I can't persuade you to join me, for I can assure you the fare is most excellent."

The captive took no notice of the remark. He was, to all appearance, dozing, and as the day waned, his condition became comatose. He failed to respond to any of the detective's jocular remarks or witty sallies. Once or twice during the long wait old Peter appeared at the doorway, with an inquiry as to whether there was any way in which he could be of service. Once Mr. Bibbs sent him away with a hastily-scribbled note. From below, now or again, came the sound of muttered voices or the shuffling of feet, as the waiting men conversed or moved about.

The short December day closed in early with black, gloomy night, a fierce wind arising that roared and rattled around the little cottage. Mr. Bibbs smoked diligently and drank sparingly. Once or twice he appeared to go off into a light doze—"just one eye closed," as he afterwards expressed it. As the night advanced, however, he became keenly awake, the prisoner, on the other hand, appearing to sink yet deeper into his slumbers.

Ten sounded in fitful chimes from the Reeves steeple, carried in careless confusion by the roaring wind. Another hour passed, and the detective became yet more keenly alert, while his companion sank yet deeper in sleep. His very breathing appeared to have stopped, as on the previous occasion. Mr. Bibbs arose once more and leaned over, listening intently for the slightest sound. There was none. The brown face was almost ashen; the man looked again like a corpse. The watcher nodded in satisfaction to himself and again resumed his seat.



"He comes! the big Sahib comes!"

It lacked ten minutes to the hour of midnight when Mr. Bibbs became aware of a slight moaning sound. It might easily have been the wind, but a careful inspection of the slumbering form convinced the detective that the sound came from there. Convulsive little shudders shook the spare frame, and the moaning became a continuous groan. Lightning spasms of pain passed across the gray features, and then the form stiffened until it became a rigid, corpselike body.

"Gosh!" hissed Mr. Bibbs, almost inaudibly. "Dashed if it ain't uncanny—eh!" The last exclamation was caused by the sudden extinction of the two lamps, and he found himself in utter darkness. Only for a moment, however, for the next there was a faint click, and a stream of light shot out from the small electric searchlight in his hand. Its beams fell upon the form of the captive. The man had arisen. Not arisen as men usually arise, but like a thing of iron, rigid and jointless. The two delicate hands were clasped together, as if in supplication. In the fierce white light from the electric lamp he looked terribly ghastly, but beneath its rays he did not blink nor move a muscle—not for as long as a man would take to count sixty. Then his right hand was slowly raised until it was outstretched before him, and a sigh of "loo, loo," escaped from his lips.

"Gosh!" again hissed Mr. Bibbs, his right hand gripping his Colt. Then, slowly, like water dripping from rocks, came the words from the mouth of the erect man:

"He comes! The big sahib comes! Plead with him, oh, brother, that he restore the Red Eye to me. Then release my fellows and let us depart in peace."

There was a loud stamp and an explosive curse. Mr. Bibbs shot his rays to the spot, and beheld the form of Captain Richard Cline Hamilton, clothed, booted and hatted, scowling at him. He flashed the light upon his prisoner—he shot it where he had last seen him standing. The man was gone!

"What the devil are you doing here?" demanded Captain Hamilton, stalking over and laying a strong grasp upon the detective.

For a moment—a moment only—Mr. Bibbs hesitated and weakened. Then that bulldog expression flashed into his face. He struggled to his feet, one red hand grasped the Captain by his coat.

"I want two things," he growled. "First I want the Red Eye, and next you shall swear by the memory of your dead wife that never again will you touch a drop of spirits. Do it! Do it quick, man! As you value your life and mine, do it!"

An all-pervading smell of whisky was everywhere.

The Captain shuddered. "Ugh!" he belched. "What a stink!"

"The Red Eye," insisted the detective.

"The Red Eye!" repeated the returned man. "Who demands the Red Eye?"

A woman's sob echoed clear and distinct through the little chamber.

"The Red Eye!" still growled Mr. Bibbs, huskily.

Again the Captain repeated the three words. Then, as if moved by an uncontrollable impulse, he wheeled about, and with a curt: "Follow me!" stalked from the room.

Across the landing, down the stairs into the lower hall, where again he turned and led the way down into the dark, gloomy cellar. Past the amazed butler, who stared with gaping mouth at his master, he strode on until they were in the vault, where only the flash from his companion's lantern illuminated the darkness. Still leading, like a man in a trance, the Captain led on until he stopped before a great demijohn of spirits.

"There," he muttered, "there, take it—take the damned thing! My God, what a stink!" he ejaculated, as the vessel was uncorked.

The detective set his small pocket light upon the rough table. Then deliberately he poured the contents of the jar upon the cement floor—poured it to the last drop. He raised the vessel and shook it. A sound as of a marble rattling came from the inside.

"Shake it out! Shake the damned thing out!" cried the Captain.

The detective obeyed, and there rolled out on the little table a great fifty-carat ruby, which lay there flashing blood red in the light. The Captain's hand shot toward it. His fingers sought to clutch it. Then he started back, with a cry of dismay:

"Gone!" he ejaculated. "Gone! My God! GONE!"

The Red Eye had vanished!

Captain Hamilton staggered back. From above came the sound of hastening feet, and old Peter's affrighted voice: "'E's down 'ere, Master Stamford; yes, sir, 'e's down in the cellar, Judge." Then Mr. Charrington's loud tones: "Hello, there, Hamilton, are you down there? Are you down there, Bibbs?"

"All right, Judge! Steady, steady! Not too much racket; everything's all right; we're coming up," called back the detective, as he slipped his arm around the Captain, and half supporting him, led him up and into the hallway, where Stamford and the Judge, with old Peter and the rest in the background, crowded around him with eager questions and demands.

"Let him be, let him be!" growled Mr. Bibbs, pushing them all aside and leading Captain Hamilton into the little den he was wont to occupy. "Sit down, sir; sit down," he suggested, half pushing the dazed man into a reclining chair. "Sit down and rest," he repeated. Then, seizing a decanter and starting to pour out a glass of whisky: "Take a drink, sir."

"NO!" yelled the Captain, leaping to his feet, and sweeping glass, decanter and spirits from the table with a wave of his hand. "NO!" he roared again. "Good God, no, man! I—I hate the damned stuff! Take it away! Hear me, take it away! Get it out of the room!"

Mr. Charrington, unable to remain outside, had stolen in, followed by the nephew, with the butler peeping from behind.

"Why, Captain, I never heard you turn down good rye before," expostulated the worthy Judge.

"Good!" almost roared the Captain, turning fiercely upon his friend. "You call that cursed stuff good, Charrington? Why, man, I tell you it's brewed in hell and drunk by fiends. I've been there; I should know."

The old Judge turned away with a worried look upon his face. He tapped his head in covert manner and whispered in Stamford's ear: "He's off, the experience has been too much for him."

"No, not that, Charrington," cried the Captain, noticing the gesture. "Never saner in my life than I am now. I have been mad before, but I'm sane now. I'll——"

There came a sudden interruption. Alf Green came bursting into the room.

"They've gone! They've gone!" he shouted. "Gone, Judge; got away with Ben and Jack watchin' 'em. The boys jus' turned around when this racket broke out here, and when they looked again they'd gone. It's true, by God, sir! Let's get after 'em! Come on, sir, come on! We'll catch the slobs yet!"

Mr. Bibbs held up one fat little hand. "It's quite true," he said, calmly. "They've gone, but we won't go after them, Mr. Sheriff. Let 'em go."

"You?" cried the deputy. "How do you know anything 'bout it—you wasn't thar."

"No," admitted the detective. "I wasn't there. But it's true just the same."

CHAPTER XVIII.
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

The gray dawn was just creeping over the eastern sky when the Captain concluded speaking some hours later. "And that," he finished "is all there is to it, Charrington."

"All!" echoed the Judge. "By Gad, Hamilton, I should think it was enough!"

Peter had vanished. The recital had proved too much for his shattered nerves. Stamford was standing his hands thrust down deep into his pockets, a position in which they had been for the last hour. The deputy and his helpers were clustered together around the door, looking like men who had heard that which they could not understand. The big fisherman, Ben, was endeavoring, in an absent-minded manner, to tear apart with his clumsy fingers a small stand cover. Siguford was investigating with curious interest the Captain's shoes. From outside came the sound of Sam's voice, as he leashed up the two hounds, preparatory to taking them home. The wind had died away, and the cold, forbidding landscape was taking shape beneath the first glimmer of the dawn.

"Yes," repeated the captain; "it was enough."

"One moment, sir," interposed Mr. Bibbs. "Would you mind going over some of those incidents again; just as a matter of curiosity to satisfy an old man. You say you had just prepared to take a bath the night as the Judge arrived?"

"Yes," replied Captain Hamilton. "I had just gone upstairs, and was debating whether I would endeavor to get down again, or plead sickness and remain up. I poured out a thin drink from the spirit case I always keep there, hoping it would pull me together a bit, for I was—well, you know, I was drunk. I was in the very act of raising the glass to my lips, when all at once the whole room seemed full of whisky. It was overpowering; everything stunk of it. It completely knocked me out, and I sank into a chair. It was just as I told you—as if it had been chloroform—I mean its effect on me was like that. I wanted to go to sleep, but to save my life I couldn't. And then from above those three white figures came—came just as naturally as if they had come in through a door. I had not even he
the trap lift. They spoke not
but they had her—you know—
and she had died twenty-two y
They held her between them.
could not be she, and yet there

and she beckoned and held out her hands to me. I knew what they had come for—you know now—the Red Eye."

The Captain paused a moment, and then resumed: "Oh, yes, I took the thing; took it twenty years ago when I was in India. It was a splendid chance. I was alone in their hill temple for over half an hour, while my men were chasing the tribesmen to the river, and I gouged the thing out of the idol's eye with my pocketknife. I was ordered back to the coast a day later, and I carried that thing with me. From that hour I have been cursed. First, my wife died, then I took to this drinking." The Captain shuddered. "And I've been at it ever since," he growled. "I went from bad to worse. I lost my nerve; I lost my will power; I lost my money; I lost my property. A hundred times I have started to sell that big jewel, but something always held me back. I could never brace myself to the point of offering it for sale. I knew I had a fortune there, yet I dared not sell it. I came out here and tried my best to break off this drinking—no, I know you don't believe it, Stamford, but I really did, and——"

"But, Captain," interrupted Mr. Bibbs, who was interested only from the professional point of view, "how did they get you away without any fuss? Weren't you able to put up any fight?"

"Fight!" echoed Captain Hamilton, in utter scorn, and then again, "Fight! Why, I was like a baby in their hands. I could do nothing. One thing they wanted, and that I could not give them—the Red Eye. I had received that letter you found, five days before, and that same day—you know I was pretty badly along in my cups—I hid the stone in the demijohn in the cellar, for I was determined they should not get it. Then I forgot what I had done with it—that's an old failing of mine when I'm in bad shape. Afterward I tried in vain to recall what I had done with it, but its hiding-place had slipped my memory completely. Although they did not speak to me, I knew what they wanted, and I ransacked my brains to think what I had done with it. I was like a puppet in their hands. I would have given it up if I had known what I had done with it."

"And then," suggested the detective, as the Captain paused.

"And then I was being carried away—away—away! My God! how fast we traveled!" The speaker drew his hand wearily over his flushed brow, as the memory of that flight came back to him. "Never shall I forget that journey. I was in my body and yet I seemed to be out of it. I remember them putting a long white robe on me, but I do not recall the exit from the cottage. I remember being cold—very cold, and then I was in a cave—a dark, lofty cave, and the river sounded close to me. Once, twice, I think, they brought my dead wife to me, and she pleaded with me to restore to them their cursed jewel. I tried to tell them, to tell her that I did not know where it was! that I had forgotten, and she sobbed when she understood what I meant—that I had forgotten. Again they brought her to me, and still I could not say, and again she sobbed, oh, so bitterly, and all around me all the time was an all-enveloping haze of whisky. I was nauseated; I was deathly sick, but I could not get away from it; it was everywhere, on everything, over everything, and I understood, oh, I understood that all the vile stuff I had ever drunk was coming away from me then—think of that, Charrington, all the whisky I had ever drunk was oozing out from me in a few hours, or days, or was it years, I could not tell. My God, Charrington! Can all this really have taken place? It seems like a terrible nightmare now.

"They read my thoughts without my speaking, and wherever I seemed to think I might have placed it, there they sent and looked, but they could not find it. And then at last—oh, it seemed years to me—there came a message, a something, a thought perhaps, I did not know what it was; how was I to know? A thought, I say, that some one somewhere was trying to help me, to help me to think what I had done with it, and they showed me the man. It was YOU!" and the Captain pointed one finger at the little detective, who merely nodded and grinned.

"It was the letter, of course, that put me on the track," he chuckled. "It was plain as you had something that they wanted, and I knew that they'd take every chance and come and look for it, so the whole party did a slope to the woods to hunt for you again, only we did a slope back again; eh, Mr. Hamilton?"

Mr. Bibbs was now the same old little garrulous, merry man he always was when not hot on the scent. He was rubbing his fat little hands together in pleasurable afterthoughts. "Please go on, sir," he requested. "I always like to go over the ground again after a successful run; it very often lends a hand in future cases."

"I did not know you," resumed Captain Hamilton. "I had never seen you before, and my thoughts were known to them. Then I knew that they were going back again to hunt for it. I knew if they could not find it that my life would probably pay the forfeit, but that did not worry me.

"Once, when I was very cold, I thought I heard my friend Charrington here, say something, but just what, I did not know; I could not understand. I thought he ordered me to stop, or to go on, or to do something. Then they told me, or I knew it, or I thought it—that they had murdered my nephew; murdered Stamford. I saw his body tossed in a raging river. He was lying passive, making no effort to struggle, and I felt that he was dead. Then I wept, for I knew that I had been the cause of his death.

"Often and often during that long waiting—those years of waiting, as it seemed, I thought I heard friendly voices—my old friend's, here, and the lad's my brother's boy; and often, oh, so often, my dead wife would come to me, never speaking, but always sobbing as if her heart would break; and through it all they never allowed my mind to wander far from the search for that wretched thing—that Red Eye—that sparkling, accusing, damning Red Eye. How I cursed the jewel. How I regretted my folly in taking the things, and a thousand times I cursed my vice that had robbed me of my power of memory.

"And then suddenly there came confusion—awful, riotous confusion. My brain was torn by hundreds of red-hot flames, and my thoughts flew to the four corners of the earth. There was anger, too, somewhere; deep, bitter hatred ran and raced all through it, and then there was struggling—fearful struggling—and then a great calm—a calm as if the sea, which before had been in fearful tempest was instantly stilled, and a great, silver moon came out and shone upon its unruffled waves; and then, and then, I was here, and that little man was with me."

"But look here, Bibbs," suddenly demanded Mr. Charrington, as he caught the little man by the lapel of his coat, "there are still some things—lots of things that I can't understand. What about those balloon anchors? What about that crowd of white figures, with the Captain, here, following along after them like a fool? And that woman, and that—who, in the devil, attacked my daughter? Who put out the lamps? Who——"

"Steady, Judge, steady!" warned the detective, holding up one podgy little finger. "Don't bite off more than you can chew, or rather don't bite off more than I can get away with. Some of these things I understand, but some I can't, and I ain't a-goin' to say as I can; there's been some luck with me this trip, I'll own up to. Listen! Here's how I've worked and what I've done, and then don't ask me another question, for I'll have told you all I know."

"Go ahead," invited the Judge, as he flung himself into a rocker, and extracted a big black cigar from his case. "Have one, Hamilton?" he invited.

The Captain shuddered and shook his head nervously.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. BIBBS TALKS.

"I knew," announced the detective, as he settled himself back in his chair and puffed away at his corncob, "just as soon as I got the meaning of that letter as I was up against the East. You know, Judge, as I spent nine years a-serving Her Majesty—God bless her memory—in India. It wasn't much of a guess to make, that. I figure as we all thought it; leastways, we ought to have. Then it was plain as these gents held a grudge against the Captain here; and as he wouldn't do as they wanted him to, what more natural than that they should come to make him? They wanted a clear road, though, so they tried to put his nephew out of the way first—old Peter didn't count much with them, I figure.

"I calculated from something he told me that they tried the occult work on him first, and as he proved himself not a fit subject, they got down to a plain murder. That part fell short, though, for he proved himself a cork, and drew out none the worse for his ducking. Then they came straight at the big game, not knowing, or not taking the trouble to know, that they had failed in the first part of the plot.

"The Captain was easy to them. He was well under the influence of mellow rye, and they took him off, via that trapdoor, the old cloth covering of which I found they'd cut two days before. They must have tried to pump him first, though; tried to pump him as to where he'd put that red stone, and they flung things about considerable hunting for it, to—no, Judge, it don't follow as you'd have seen 'em, for I see as you think you should—when you are dealing with the East, you are up against something as we chaps over here don't begin to understand. They can—you know they can, Judge—get clean outside of their dried-up little bodies, and get back into 'em again, too, seemingly none the worse for the trip. Now, I don't figure as they intended to hurt your daughter; that don't follow at all. She was in the way, and wasn't an easy subject to deal with according to their style, so she got bumped down. This little, old United States is a long way from the East in more ways than miles, and Miss Charrington, I take it, though, of course, I've never see her, is a young lady with a considerable mind of her own.

"Now, then, one, or perhaps two of 'em makes off with the Captain; one or more, maybe, stays around here all the time while you was hunting around here that night. Oh, no, it don't follow as you'd have to have seen 'em at all; they're mighty slippery at making themselves invisible when they're in a tight place, I'll promise you. You get onto that, Judge, sir!"

"So the Captain was gone, and I guessed as they'd keep him in some snug little place—that big cove under John's Bluff, as it turns out—though, of course, I didn't know just where, but I knew they wouldn't harm him, for if he cashed in, their chance of getting hold of the Red Eye would be slim. He, and only he, knew where it was, and he'd forgotten, mind you.

"That trail as you followed led you all right as far as it went; me and Mr. Hamilton went over it again that night when I went out, didn't we, sir? And the trouble was you didn't go far enough. They left you stumped at that big tree, and made off over the tops to John's Bluff cave; and the anchors—why, God bless my soul, sir! your sheriff here ought to have been able to have explained that to you, for when I come to question him, he allows as a big dirigible was over these woods less than six months before, and had a pile of trouble clearing the tops. What more probable than that they flung out all the weight they carried trying to rise?

"There were three old sacks half filled with sand as me and Mr. Hamilton found, anyway, lying not three hundred yards from that tree, and if you'd only taken the trouble to hunt for them, you'd have found them, but there you all sat a-staring up and getting Mr. Hamilton here to climb up and down, and all the time they were lying snug in John's Bluff cave."

"But what about that crowd I fired into, Bibbs; what about seeing the Captain, and we all saw him and heard that woman sob, too?"

"No, no, Judge, say you THOUGHT you did. Look here, let me tell you something I thought I saw when I was out in that blasted hot country. I saw one of these chaps—a little bit of an insignificant-looking fellow—fool ten thousand people into thinking they saw a man and a horse turn somersaults all up and down a polo field at Ragoon; and the folks went away swearing as they saw it, and there's been a hundred fights over that story since. Men would say as they saw it, and others would say they didn't, and as they lied, and then they'd fight over it; but I saw it, or thought as I did.

"Gosh, Judge! Can you tell me where the real ends and the unreal begins. I can't—not in India. You never saw that crowd at all; you just thought you did. You note that when you fired into 'em the scene vanished, didn't it? 'Cause why? You broke up the pretty little play, that's why. That was all put on by the power of suggestion, and nothing else.

The old Virginian shook his head vigorously. "Never! Never!" he ejaculated. "I'll never believe that, Bibbs!" but Captain Hamilton nodded his head.

"Yes," he whispered, "I can believe it; I put in ten years there. They do some very extraordinary things—most extraordinary."

"If this is so," observed young Stamford, "I can better understand the behaviour of the dogs. This occult element would account for it, eh, uncle?"

"Well, where's that big ruby?" demanded the Judge, still unconvinced. "How can they take things and slip away without a soul seeing them?"

The detective shrugged his shoulders. "I told you I'd tell you all I knew; now I've done it, sir," he replied, simply.

Judge Charrington looked thoughtful. "It may be, it may be," he murmured, "but it's utterly beyond me, I confess."

"I don't give a damn!" suddenly exploded Captain Hamilton, with a touch of his old manner. "The thing's gone; they've got the Red Eye, and—and—" he lowered his voice until it was scarcely a whisper, but an earnest, convincing whisper that sounded all through the little room—"I'm cured—cured of my curse. I'll never touch a drop as long as I live, so help me, God!"

The ex-naval captain brought his fist down with a crash on the little table.

The End.

Alice Clement, Detective

A WOMAN'S WILES

By COURTNEY R. COOPER

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(Editor's Note—On the payroll of the municipal detective department of the city of Chicago appears the name of Alice Clement, sleuth. To the trackers of men who make their headquarters at the bureau at 179 North La Salle street, she is known as "Alice of the Smile." Fearless, resourceful, dangerous in a hundred simple little disguises which mask her, yet do not hinder her, she has found the evidence which has sent many a man and many a woman to the penitentiary. There is hardly a dangerous dive of the great city which she, in her twelve years of detective life, has not visited. More than once has her life been in danger, many times has she been compelled to use the dirk or the revolver that she carries for protection. And yet, through it all, she has remained pretty, vivacious, full of life and the love of living—and always deserving of her name, "Alice of the Smile." Too, she has always remained reticent, non-communicative about her adventures, until Mr. Cooper persuaded her to tell her adventures for the first time.)

Springtime in Lincoln Park, Chicago, means duetic gatherings on the benches, wandering couples along the paths, whirring motor cars on the smooth Lake Shore and happiness almost everywhere. we strolled along we were amusedly the ones who felt es in a little world apart talked foolishness into each other's ears. The fact that it was day did not seem to make much difference. The little woman detective who strolled beside me smiled at the couples about us, then turned her gaze to the rolling lake, where, in the distance, a lumbering freighter was lazily dipping into the horizon.

"'When Love is young in springtime——'" I quoted. Alice Clement, off for a half-holiday from her work as a catcher of criminals for the city of Chicago, laughed and then watched for a moment my idle occupation of driving small pebbles along the pathway with my stick.

"Love is young pretty much of the time," she said at last. "And the younger it gets, more fool things it will make a person do. That's the trouble with it, you never can count on just what the outcome is going to be. I don't look like a woman who could cause a murder, do I?"

I stopped short at the remark, then gazed at her. Trimly dressed, her young, almost girlish face looking up with that happy smile on the fulsome lips, the deep, brown eyes sparkling—well, it would have been hard to imagine what any one except some old married man like myself would do, and I said so. She laughed softly—and was silent.

Soon the happy expression seemed to leave her face, and a bit of sadness came in its place. We had found a bench in a spot where the warm sun was good, and near where an energetic squirrel was practicing its calisthenics upon the trunk of a budding tree. I waited for her to speak, and, waiting in vain, prompted her.

"A romance?"

"Just a detective assignment," she answered. "Where love played the wrong way a long time, and then turned right just at the proper moment. Don't bother to remember the names; I'm going to change them.

"It was not so long after I had made my entrance into the detective world and I was eager for every case. I am still eager, for that matter; but you know how it is, when one is young in the business. One morning I received a summons to detective headquarters.

"'Alice,' said the captain, 'we're going to need you and your smile. Here's a picture of Clayton Rogers. The bureau wants him for a $5,000 embezzlement. I think he's gone to St. Louis, but I can't be sure. You'd better run down there at once and locate him if you can.'

"But I did not take the next train to St. Louis and rely on my ingenuity to find my man in a city of half a million people. A story-book detective might have done that, but I'm only an ordinary city sleuth, and so I did the logical thing. I went out and saw Clayton's mother, told her I was an old sweetheart and that I was crying my heart out for a word from my own dear boy. And quite naturally, I learned that he really was in St. Louis, working in a bindery plant there—which one she did not know. That, however, was a better lead than nothing, and so the next morning found me in the city on the Mississippi.

"My work was ahead of me. I had studied that picture until every line of it was indelibly pressed into my brain. And many a time while studying I had said sharp little things about Mr. Clayton Rogers because he had not had his photograph taken for twelve years. This proposition of trying to figure out how a man will look after so many years is not an easy thing. But I did the best I could.

"One by one I took the binderies, four to a day. In the early morning I would watch the employes coming to work. At noon I would watch others going and coming. At night I would stand by some tall building to keep my eyes on the outpouring string from book and publishing houses. And at last there came a bit of hope into my heart.

"A man had passed within three feet of me, a man with eyes of just the sort I believed those of Rogers to be. There was something about the expression of his face that was like that of Rogers, too. There was a chance it was not he; there was just as great a chance that I had found my man. I determined to find out.

"The next morning there was a new girl on one of the book-binding machines in the great workroom where the man I believed I wanted was stationed. Simply dressed, yet as prettily as possible in keeping with a wage of eight dollars a week, I had set out to play a game of heart. Clayton Rogers liked women. I had learned that. And if this was the man——"

The old freighter was lowering itself farther and farther into the horizon now. The squirrel had approached closely, and was regarding us with curious eyes. Alice Clement was thoughtful.

"Perhaps you've never worked in a book bindery," she said, "and I don't guess you have. And perhaps, too, you've never been hoping and hoping that your lead was right, only to be assured day after day that you were on the wrong trail. That was my situation. Clayton Rogers was a flirt. A pretty woman, to him, was the only thing in the world. More than once in the days that followed my entrance to the bindery I allowed myself to smile at him out of the corner of an eye, but never a glance returned. I turned to the other employes.

"I learned that, as far as they knew, he was a young farmer from Franklin County who had just come to the city to learn the book-binding trade. He was sober. He was industrious. He was quiet. The real Clayton Rogers was none of these three. It began to impress me more and more that I was tracking the wrong man.

"'When did he come here?' I asked of the girl who was giving me the information—without knowing why, of course.

"'A month ago,' came the answer.

"A month ago! That was exactly a week after Rogers had fled Chicago.

"'Where from?'

"'Labaddie.'

"That night I boarded a train for the small Missouri town. The next afternoon I was back at my work, with a bit of reassurance in my heart. At least, Labaddie did not possess a young man of his appearance and of the name by which he was entered on the books of the company. I smiled at him again that day as he passed from his work to get a drink of water. My heart thumped. He had stopped and was gazing at me.

"'You weren't at work this morning,' he said, gravely.

"'I was ill,' I answered, as innocently as I could, and looked down at my work again.

"He passed on, and my best wishes went with him, for I knew that it would not be long before I found out whether or not I was trailing a man I had recognized from a picture twelve years old. We met to speak a few words the next day—the next and the next.

"One night he took me to a vaudeville show, and then escorted me to the little room I had rented—and there left me to wonder and wonder again if I was not wrong. If this man was Clayton Rogers he had changed every filament of his character. Grave, thoughtful, polite, he was different from the man who had been described to me, and who had spent $5,000 among the white lights of Chicago. And yet——"

There was a little pause while Miss Clement watched the sober yet happy faces of two lovers across the velvet lawn.

"And yet?" I prompted.

"And yet, even as he told about his home life, as he described the country around Labaddie, the house, everything, I remembered what the people there had said. I must be on the right track! I sat alone in my room that night, trying to dissect his every action, to see behind his every move, and failed. I knew that it would have been possible for a mistake in Labaddie, and yet I felt that I was sure of everything I had learned there. I had three weeks more in which to work. I determined to make the most of it.

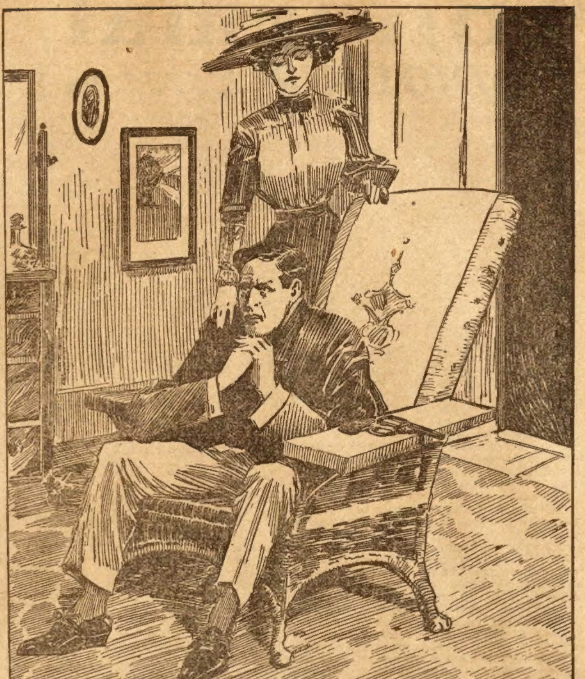
"It was a few nights after that that Mr. Henderson (that was the name on the company's books) asked me once more to go to the theater with him. And that night, as we stood by my door to say good-by, he paused.

"'Miss Wilson,' he began calling me, of course, by my assumed name, 'I know you'll think it's forward of me and all that, but there's something I can't hold back from you any longer. I——"

"My heart jumped.

"'You are a gentleman,' I answered him. 'I have seen nothing forward in your actions.'

"'I have tried to be a gentleman,' he answered, 'simply for the reason that since the first moment I saw you in the shop, I fell in love with you. Some way, you don't look like the ordinary girl who works in a bindery shop. There's something better about you, something more refined. I hope you're not angry.'



"He's stolen my every hope!"

"'Why should I be?' I questioned, seriously. 'I——"

"'Miss Wilson!' He had stepped toward me anxiously.

"I put him off.

"'It is not love on my part,' I answered. 'I think a great deal of you, Mr. Henderson, but I cannot say that I love you—yet.'

"'But there is hope?' he asked, with a queer little pang in his voice.

"'In time,' I answered.

"He left. And then I went into my room to mentally becudgel myself for not having pulled everything from him while his heart was warm with excitement, when his lips would have been willing to speak of everything, to confess everything. I walked the floor and scowled at myself in the mirror. I saw, all too late, a thousand ways in which I might have drawn from him every truth of his identity. I could have played him, I could have forced him, by the right kind of questioning, to have told everything. And I had let the chance slip!

"The next morning my feeling of remorse was worse. I took my place at my machine and looked about me. He was absent. An hour passed and still he did not come. Two hours. Three. Things blurred before me. Something had happened to take him away. Now, as never I had felt before, there came the conviction that this man was not Henderson, that he did not live at Labaddie, but that he was Clayton Rogers, the man I was hunting, and that his place was in a penitentiary for theft. I went to the foreman.

"'I had an engagement with Mr. Henderson. He was going to show me something about the work. He is not here. Is he ill?' I asked.

"'Drew his time this morning downstairs,' the foreman answered. 'He's gone.'

"'Gone?' The words went through my brain like fire. Then he had understood last night. I had let some word drop that gave him the hint. Perhaps he had heard from his mother, he had received the information of the old sweetheart who had sought him at the home—and he knew! I walked dazedly back to my machine and looked at its whirring belt. Then I took off my apron.

"'I am leaving,' I told the foreman. 'Give me my time.'"

I happened to look into the face of Alice Clement just then. I saw that in her memory she was suffering all that she had suffered at that moment in the bindery. I saw before me a woman whose brain was keen enough to suffer even in retrospection, and whose sensibilities were of that finely attuned strain that re-lives pain and sorrow, happiness and joy, again and again. She was speaking.

"There was a chance left. I had learned his address, at least. A car was coming to a stop at the opposite corner, and I ran for it. Twenty minutes later I was walking through the dark hall of a rooming house to where the landlady said Mr. Henderson had his room. I knocked on the door. There was no answer. I knocked again. There came from the inside the tread of a man's footsteps. I believed I heard a voice, as though some one was talking to himself. I ceased knocking. I put my ear to the keyhole and listened:

"'And, by God, I'll kill him first!'

"It was Henderson's voice, brutal, tense. What was wrong, I did not know. One thing I realized, that something had happened, that now or never the truth would come out, that if this man was Clayton Rogers, now was the time when I would learn it, and that action must be swift. He might be drunk, he might be crazed with drugs. There was no time for me to get assistance; I must work and work fast. I turned the knob of the door. It did not yield. I pulled a skeleton key from my bag and inserted it in the lock. I felt the bolt shift. A tremble ran through me as I reached for my revolver and hid it in a fold of my dress. Then, with a hurried push, I sent the door flying open.

"A mad man faced me. Eyes wide and staring, hair unkempt, mouth low drawn and shaking, the man whom I sought stood before me. He had not slept, that was evident. His hands shook. In one trembling claw he held a revolver. He started forward as I entered, the revolver half raised into the air, then recoiled.

"'You——!" he half screamed. 'You!'

"I stood facing him. I tried to speak. I failed. The sight of the wreck of the man before me seemed to have taken my voice. He laid the revolver on the table, and springing toward me, seized me by a wrist.

"'What are you doing here?' he asked wildly. 'Answer me! What are you doing here?'

"'You were not at work,' I answered, as hastily as I could. 'I wondered what had become of you—they said you had left—I had a right to know—after what you said last night!'

"He broke away from me with a sob.

"'Yes, last night!' he groaned. 'Last night!'

"I approached him.

"'What has happened?' I begged. 'Can't you tell me what it is that is weighing on you? Can't you trust me?'

"The eyes that stared into mine seemed glassy.

"'Tell you?' he asked, dully. 'Tell you? The one person I wanted to keep it from? The one person——' He broke off in a wild laugh. I felt my heart leap. Then he was Clayton Rogers! It was the time for me to play my game and play it hard. I rushed toward him.

"'Jim!' I called to him in the name he had assumed, 'why should you keep anything from me? I told you last night that I did not care, that I could not care—I lied to you, Jim. I do care—I care enough, so that no matter what may happen, no matter what you may have done or will do, I will still care. And now, won't you tell me what it is that is worrying you? Won't you, Jim?'

"He stood and looked at me for a moment. His arms dropped weakly to his sides. When he spoke his voice was hoarse and choking.

"'Blackmail,' he said slowly.

"'Blackmail?' I asked. This was even new to me.

"Yes, blackmail. I've got an enemy. He trailed me here from Chicago, found out I was going with you, and since then he has been bleeding me for every cent I possess, and God knows I've got little enough left now.'

"At last I had him.

"'Chicago?' I asked with surprise in my voice. My hand still gripped the revolver. 'What were you doing in Chicago?'

"He gave me one wild look at me, whirled, walked toward the table on which his revolver lay, and then stopped stock still.

"'What was I doing in Chicago?' A smile that was almost grewsome came to his face. 'I was in Chicago because I lived there, because I worked there, because I stole money there and then ran away. There!' He lifted his arms and his eyes grew more glassy than ever. 'There's the truth. You said you'd stick by me, and I've told you. I stole money in Chicago and ran away. I came down here. One man knew it. He followed me. He found out where I worked. He saw that I was beginning to care for you and then—then—' the voice grew cracked, high pitched—'then he started bleeding me! And now, now I've stood all of it I'm going to stand. He's taken away from me every chance I had in life; he's robbed me, he's stolen my every hope from me, he's forced me to tell you what I had wanted to keep from you—and he's going to pay for it!'

"I seized his arm.

"'What do you mean by that?' I felt that my voice was tense, too.

"The wide eyes looked down at me with a fierce glint in them. With one trembling hand he patted mine. Then he whirled and began to pace the floor.

"'What do you suppose I mean?' he asked. He pointed to the revolver. 'That's what I mean! He's coming here this afternoon for more money. I won't have it. You know what he'll do—he'll run out of this place and tell the——'

"Suddenly he stopped and looked at me. He smiled the least bit, but the corners of his mouth drooped cynically downward, and the eyes took on an evil look.

"'I'm wondering about you,' he said at last, and then stood looking at me rather blankly. I felt my hand grip tighter than ever on my revolver, while I thought of the little kiddie that was waiting at home in Chicago for her mother—who stood right now in danger of never returning. I knew that my face had gone white, and that my heart was beating thumpingly, but still I faced him.

"'What are you wondering about me?' I asked, slowly.

"He seemed to waver a bit. I could see that the nervous tension of many hours had begun to tell on him. Before me was a task—that of playing him until my chance could come, until I could find a way of subduing him. At last he spoke.

"'What have I been wondering about you?' he asked. He advanced toward me. 'I've been wondering if you're not a schemer, too, if you haven't been set on my track to hound me down and——'

"'Jim!' I was before him now, with every possible emotion of pleading in my face. 'Jim, you wouldn't believe that of me, would you? You wouldn't—you couldn't! Jim, pull yourself together! You've got to keep your head about you. You can't go all to pieces this way. Some one in the house will hear you through the door; they'll learn—they'll tell the police.'

"'They'll tell the police anyway—'he looked at the little clock on the wall—'in just twenty minutes. He will be here then, and when he walks in that door, I shoot!"

"'You don't mean that, Jim!'

"'When he walks in that door I shoot!' he repeated.

"Then he suddenly turned silent. For a moment he stood there, waving his head from side to side, something in the manner of a wild beast. At last, with a sigh, he began to pace the floor again, his eyes down, his lower lip hanging.

"Five minutes passed and neither of us spoke. Ten went by, and still there was silence in the room, except for the pacing step of the man as he walked to and fro, his eyes glancing downward, his lips moving now and then, but wordless. Once he stopped and looked at the clock.

"'Not long now,' he said.

"'Jim—' I was really pleading now, with all the heart and soul that a woman can muster—'you wouldn't add that to other things, would you? Say you won't—for me. We'll find a way out of this somehow, we'll——"

"He only shook his head. Suddenly he looked up and laughed.

"'I'm tired of being called Jim. My name is Clayton Rogers.'

"'Let's forget that,' I answered. 'You are only Jim to me.'

"He stopped, patted my hands again, and then began his pacing once more. Now he was silent as before, his head was once more lowered. Five minutes remained. I clenched my teeth to keep them from chattering—and then, my brain cleared. The chance had come. As though he had forgotten me, he had turned, walked to the window, and was

(Continued on page twelve.)

The Abnormal Thing

Or, THE LAST DINOSAUR .:.:.:.: By L. JACKSON STRONG

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CHAPTER IX.

GONE!

"FELTON!" he shouted at length, "in all the world there is none like this. I've seen every one of them, and there is none—none like this! And it is, undoubtedly, such as I found alive." He regarded Felton with bitter envy a moment, then crushing the ungenerous feeling, added: "You have done a great service for the world of science in this discovery. Your name——"

"No, no," Felton broke in, laughing, "I want nothing to do with the ancient bones. I'll make out a paper to that effect if you like. I'm too ignorant to appreciate the old fellow, I'm afraid. My sordid mind is entirely set upon the gold. It'll take a lot to get your specimen before the world."

Swainfurth looked up with a shade of anxiety; "I think I have means enough, at any rate, I have no claim to this."

"What's mine's yours, Papa Swainfurth," Felton declared gayly, his heart warming as he thought of Edith, and recalled that nothing now stood in the way of their happiness. "We're partners in this gold mine, share and share alike."

"Thank you, my boy. I will gratefully accept your offer if I have need," the Professor said, with unusual feeling. "I cannot understand how you so easily relinquish all claim to this mighty relic of unknown antiquity, except, indeed, it is, as you say, from your ignorance, of which I hesitate to take advantage. However, if you ever——"

"No, no," Felton protested again, "I never could cultivate, or even simulate, successfully, an interest in antiquities. You should remember that," he laughed, and the Professor smiled dryly. "The 'Now' is enough for me, and if you do not adopt the specimen and give it your name, it'll go thundering down the ages, nameless, for all me."

The Professor's face glowed with gratification as he thanked Felton, and returned to a wrapt contemplation of his treasure, while Felton stretched himself out for the night, wondering how it fared with Billford, and thinking that he would be pretty hungry. Before he set off at daybreak, he and the Professor decided that it would be necessary to hold Billford a prisoner until they had their affairs satisfactorily arranged, and safe from any meddling of his.

Felton had no difficulty in locating the quasi-prison, and approached with an amused smile.

"Hello, Billford! Good and hungry?" he shouted. Not even a curse came in reply. He was sulking still. Or had some wild beast, after tearing down the signal, followed his trail back, and destroyed the helpless man? It was a disquieting thought!

Felton hastened to examine the nook, but instead of ghastly human fragments, he found the rope, or cord, which Billford had sawed in pieces on the jagged rock. A long, and, according to traces of blood on the rocks, a painful process; but he had escaped. Felton reddened with chagrin and vexation that he had not thought of this simple maneuver, and taken measures to prevent it.

"It's plain that I wasn't cut out for a man-catcher, any more than I was for a scientist," he growled to himself.

Of course, Billford had come upon, and torn down the streamers, perhaps he had taken them to be merely a guide to his own whereabouts, and had hoped to cause Felton trouble in finding him again. Or, he might have suspected it had a more important meaning, and had lurked about watching, until their arrival and movements had disclosed to him the exact location of the cavern. He would know, from the directions furnished him, that it was in the vicinity, but Felton was certain that he would never have discovered it unaided; for, from the opposite side of the chasm, the mouth of the cavern was only an unnoticeable blotch upon the face of the precipice; and if the Professor, accustomed to keen scrutiny of all Nature, had failed to find the ledge from the slope, Billford could not have found it.

"In my efforts to get rid of him, I only helped him by bringing him here," Felton reflected ruefully.

It had been done unwittingly, of course, as he himself was unaware of the very existence of the cavern at the time; still it was exasperating that the fates seemed to have used him in the furtherance of Billford's designs.

He was perhaps now watching and waiting an opportunity to steal into the cavern, when both were away, and jump their claim, making them a great deal of trouble; therefore one of them must remain in possession, while the other took the steps necessary to establishing legal ownership.

On reaching the cavern, Felton found, as he had expected, that the matter was already settled, for nothing could have induced Swainfurth to leave the cavern until he could take the ancient relic with him. The cavern faced easterly, and was well lighted in the early part of the day, the sun even venturing to send in a few golden shafts, revealing with thrilling distinctness the golden treasure, as well as the startling ugliness of the immense skeleton, so long its grim guardian.

"Felton, I am hoping we shall find it in perfect condition," was the Professors' greeting. "There is not a flaw in the exposed parts, it is amazing!" he gloated over it.

"Yes, it is certainly amazing," Felton assented, gloating over the gold glinting in the walls about him. Then, with a laugh at the absurd display of their mutual characteristics, he told the Professor of Billford's escape.

Swainfurth was not concerned, believing that while they were in possession of the place the fellow was powerless to injure them, and feeling quite certain that there was nothing now for him to discover.

"I am convinced," he explained to Felton, "that when I incurred his ill-will, Billford went straight to VanStettor with my views and plans for investigation. VanStettor has maintained a very antagonistic attitude toward me since my Silurian discoveries so dwarfed his own work in the same field. He is somewhat disabled with rheumatism, and perhaps did not care to undertake it himself, unless Billford's reports warranted the effort on his part, as was my plan at first, which I am now thankful was not carried out. At any rate, VanStettor thought I might happen upon something unusual, and engaged Billford to spy upon me."

Felton considered that very childish, not to say foolish conduct to impute to a so-called wise man, but did not say so; scientists were mostly cranks, anyway, in his opinion.

"The puzzling point is," the Professor went on, "whence came the reference to the golden cavern, and the peculiar peak that marks its vicinity? VanStettor could have known nothing of the legend of the cavern, and the guarding evil spirit; there was no mention of it in the newspaper story. I did not know of it until I interviewed the old Indian, and even then I failed to attach any importance to it, being wholly occupied with the idea of an unknown living creature."

"Well, wherever he got his knowledge, Billford expected to make a good thing out of it, that's plain from his hints to me," Felton commented, "and if he'd gone straight about his business instead of dogging me, who knows but he might have discovered——"

"The priceless skeleton, and claimed it for VanStettor!" the Professor shrieked, ready to fight at the thought.

"The gold, I was going to say," grinned Felton. "But he didn't, and after all, I doubt if he would have found the cavern if he had climbed all over these two mountains; I fell into it, you know, by mere accident. Anyhow, it and all it contains is ours, and the thing is to hold it against all intruders. I am going to leave you my gun, as you never carry one, and a shot or two in his direction will make Billford crawfish in a hurry, should he try to crawl around on the ledge."

"There are rocks here in profusion. Let him but show himself, and I'll beat him off into the chasm as I would an abominable rattlesnake," the Professor declared, vindictively.

"You'd have the drop on him sure, with all those stones at hand. But I'll leave the gun, and get a couple in the village, I saw they had plenty. I suppose I can tell Edith now."

"Perhaps you'd better," Swainfurth hesitated. "But she must keep a strict silence. We cannot make this great discovery public until we are sure of legal protection, which may be difficult to obtain in this almost lawless quarter."

Felton saw the wisdom of this, and nodded.

"And that reminds me," the Professor continued, "that it would be best for us, to wire to my lawyer who has charge of my affairs, and have him come out at once, with sufficient money, and manage the whole matter for us." Without waiting Felton's reply, he seated himself and began the message in the notebook Felton had brought.

"Why, that is immense!" Felton exclaimed, glad to be relieved of the responsibility of a business with which he was not familiar. "He'll be here in a few days. We can hold the fort easily till then, if we hold our tongues."

"We'll do both," Swainfurth said, grimly. "Perhaps it would be well to bring Edith back with you. She will be eager to come. She wanted to accompany me, and she is very good at tramping. Bring only the necessaries for a short stay; I would like a shovel, but cannot ask you to undertake anything so cumbersome—and I can remove considerable of the soil from the skeleton with my hands."

"I'm sorry, but I guess I couldn't very well manage a shovel, with the rest," Felton smiled. "But it won't be long till you can uncover the whole mass," Felton said gayly, delighted at the idea of having Edith with them. She might find it impossible to crawl around on the narrow ledge above the chasm, but he had traversed it time and again now, to become accustomed to it, and exhilarated with love and success, he felt that he could safely carry her if necessary. Thinking of the Professor's absorption in the skeleton, he added one more caution.

"You want to keep a sharp lookout, Professor, that they don't get the sneak on you. Remember that bit of paper referred Billford to some one who must be out here; and he may turn up with reinforcements enough to make hot work for you. I have such an early start, I may get around before Billford, if he stops to raise a regiment."

"This prehistoric relic is ours, indisputably, by right of discovery——"

"Also the gold——" interjected the persistent Felton.

"And no man, nor army of men, shall so much as lay a sacrilegious finger upon it. At their peril, let them attempt to force an entrance to the cavern!" He flourished the revolver in one hand, and a rock in the other.

"All right! Only don't shoot yourself," Felton smiled, hastening off.

As he thought it over, Felton began to feel considerable uneasiness at the possibility of being prevented from re-entering the cavern again, at least very soon. From appearances, Billford had knowledge of the gold, and would make desperate attempts to obtain it, aided, perhaps, by the person, or persons, to whom he had been directed. If they held the entrance to the cavern upon his return, there would probably be serious trouble, even danger; and although a bitter disappointment to himself, Felton decided that Edith had better remain in the village until they were in full and peaceable possession of their rights.

Not realizing the reckless vindictiveness of Billford's nature when stirred to its depths, and especially when unhampered by fear of the law, as was the case in this almost lawless region, Felton believed the attempt to oust them from the cavern was the only thing possible to his spite now; thus overlooking the most exposed, vulnerable, and by far the most important point of attack for the unscrupulous scoundrel; and did not at all anticipate the blow which presently fell upon him.

CHAPTER X.

THE DEED OF A SNEAK.

Anxious to get back to the cavern, Felton forged ahead with only occasional halts, until sheer weariness compelled him to camp some time after midnight. He was on the way again at the first hint of dawn, and arrived at the village before it was fairly awake. He could not seek Edith at that hour, and needing a good meal; he went to the hotel where he had left his traps, and rested upon the porch until the house was astir.

The forlorn little hamlet looked even more forlorn and desolate than when he first saw it, and he remarked upon it to the landlady when she appeared.

"Most everybody's gone, that's the reason," she replied.

"Gone where?" Felton asked, his amazing experiences having put out of his mind the excitement over the latest gold find.

"Stampeded for the new diggin's, of course. Most 'f the men's gone, and lots of the women. My old man hiked it with the first; but I reckon I'll hold on here a spell and keep him grub-staked. There's good pickin's here train times, feedin' the crowd," she laughed. "Only it's a sure hustle for me, and little help. The whites are most all goin', and the lazy half-breeds and Injuns won't work."

She bustled about energetically, too much occupied to be curious as to whether Felton had been, or was going, to the diggin's.

Hoping to get on the track of Billford, Felton mentioned him, and the evening they had taken supper there together, asking if he had been back.

"You mean the sandy-haired man with the egg-shaped head, and slant eyes," she particularized, hitting Billford's appearance cleverly. "His grip's here yet, but he hasn't been back unless it was at train time, and in the rush I missed seein' him. He's gone to the diggin's, I reckon."

After breakfasting, Felton went to the station and sent the Professor's message; then repeating the landlady's description of Billford, asked about him again.

The agent, sulky because a contract prevented him from seeking his fortune immediately with the crowd, snarled that 'only a fool tenderfoot would expect him to notice any man in particular, among the scores unloading there for the gold field; but if there was such a fellow as Billford, he wished he'd show up, as there was a raft of telegrams waiting for him, and nobody knowing where he kept himself.

"Telegrams! Where from?" Felton asked, involuntarily.

"That's his business! You chase yourself out!" the agent growled.

Felton apologized briefly, for the implied impertinence, and complied with the not very polite request, or command. From the telegrams it would seem that Billford was not carrying out arrangements; or, that VanStettor had grown impatient. Where was Billford, and what had he been doing all the time since his escape from the mountain? It was possible that he had lost himself, and was wandering about, in a half-starved condition.

"He has only himself to thank for it, anyhow," Felton muttered.

He hardly thought such a thing had happened, although it was curious what he had done with himself. Billford might have gone at once to the Indians, not daring to propose his scheme to attack the cavern to white men. If he had succeeded in cajoling either Indians or half-breeds to join him in the attempt, Felton thought it might be worth while to find out the size of his force, by visiting the Indians himself, although it would be at a considerable loss of time. He decided finally to let it go for the present. If Billford had raised a force to try to take the cavern, he would present himself sooner, perhaps, than they cared for, and if he did not appear shortly, he and the Professor would take turns in looking for the fellow. They did not want his death at their door, though brought about by his own actions.

With this, Felton dismissed Billford from his mind, purchased the guns and ammunition, then strolled along slowly toward the house where the Swainfurths had rooms, giving Edith time to breakfast, and musing upon the changes, in the near future, for the little village, when the news of his own great gold find and the professor's astounding discovery had been given to the public.

Eager gold seekers would flock to the mountains hitherto considered but barren waste, amazed, incredulous scientists and crowds of curious tourists, would journey into this far wilderness to look upon the erstwhile home and haunts of the recently living monster, whose age no man might compute. To work their mine, he and the Professor would need machinery, men, and supplies of all sorts; and the small village, now being deserted, would be their headquarters, for a time, at least, and to meet the requirements of gold seekers, scientists, and tourists it would, necessarily, expand into something of a city. As soon as practicable, they must construct a passable road to the spot upon the lake shore destined to become historic, and which he and the Professor claimed, as they did the cavern and contents, by right of discovery.

In time they would erect a mammoth hotel upon the little bay, where, from their windows the guests might gaze upon the stupendous, polished slides on the face of the towering cliffs of rock, down which, for ages, the monstrous creature had coasted. The world-wide wonder of it, and the world-wide interest in the region would never cease. Eventually a metropolis would spring up, wherein, with all their gold, the Professor might realize his dream of founding a Scientific School, and Museum of Antiquities—a monument to his enduring fame.

It was a very alluring picture to contemplate, and unconsciously Felton's pace quickened with the desire to tell everything to Edith, and talk over everything with her. He smiled, anticipating her mingled astonishment, incredulity, horror, relief, pride, and joy, as she listened to the various experiences and achievements of her father and himself.

The green paper shades were still down at the windows of the front room, but he could wait no longer, and at the risk of rousing her from a late nap he knocked repeatedly, but received no answer.

After all, it seemed she was out on a morning tramp, as he knew was sometimes her habit, and he went around to the back part occupied by the family to inquire. He found a woman and a boy hurrying about, piling their scanty household goods as if for removal.

"Good morning." Felton lifted his hat. "Can you tell me if Miss Swainfurth is——"

"Miss Swainfurth!" the woman snapped the name out of his mouth. "It's time she sent some word! I'd 'a'put their duds out, and took my own things, only the old man paid a month ahead, and I reckoned they could hold the rooms. You take the key and tell——"

"The key?" Felton shouted. "Isn't she here?"

"No she ain't! and it ain't treatin' me right, either, leavin' me not knowin' if they wus ever comin' back, or what to do with their duds!"

"Where did she go? And when did she

leave?" Felton questioned, half paralyzed with a sickening premonition.

"How should I know, when she didn't say boo! about where she was goin', and it was two or three days ago that she put out, not——"

"But you must know why she went away—and where!" Felton bawled desperately.

"I don't know! and you needn't yell at me!" the woman bristled. "She run into my part and said she had to go away, and hardly stopped for that much, but left—and streaked it down the railroad, Jimmy said, with the feller that must've come for her—and I don't like bein' left in the lurch so—and my man gone to the diggin's, and 'spectin' us to foller—and me havin' to get the landlady at the hotel to look after the rooms and the things. It ain't treatin' me right!" She spluttered herself out of breath, glaring angrily at Felton, including him in the offense.

Felton did not hear half of the tirade. This was what Billford had been doing—wreaking an unmanly vengeance upon a defenseless girl! He was certain it was Billford's work! Where had he taken Edith? Could he find a clew?

"May I look through their rooms?" he asked.

"Of course; but I've looked. There ain't anything that tells where she is, and when she's comin' back," she said opening the door between.

She was mistaken, having overlooked a bit of paper that had been crumpled hastily and tossed aside. Felton, who was expecting, or hoping, to find something of the sort, snatched it, and smoothing it out, found a few lines scrawled as if in great haste, informing Edith that her father had met with an accident and wished her to come to him at once. While it was serious, she was not to be alarmed, as his life was not endangered; and she was to be careful of herself, and take plenty of time on the way; that he would have come for her himself only it seemed best for him to remain with her father, but that she could trust the bearer implicitly. It was signed, "As ever, yours, John Felton."

The coward's trap was well arranged and well baited. Edith, devoted daughter that she was, impulsive, warm-hearted Edith had walked into it without a moment's hesitation. She had no knowledge of what had occurred between himself and Billford; she might even have supposed that Billford had gone with the fortune hunters, thus accounting for his absence from Sandburg; and in the shock of receiving such news, she would not think of questioning the validity of the note, or of criticising the handwriting. She had at once, and unsuspectingly, placed herself in the power of that dastardly scoundrel. Where was she now? Whither had he taken her? Let him so much as injure a hair of her head! Felton ground a curse and a threat between his teeth, asking sharply!

"Where will I find the fellow you call Jimmy, who saw Miss Swainfurth last with the messenger?"

"Jimmy's my boy here. What d'ye want of him?"

"I want him to run around and help me get men together to hunt——"

"Gracious!" she interrupted. "D'ye think you could get a man for love or money, to go anywheres but to the diggin's? And they're all gone, mostly, anyways, or goin', fast as they can. And b'sides, Miss Swainfurth ain't a kid; she's big enough and old enough to know where she wants to go, and who she's goin' with, too."

With a momentary feeling of despair, Felton realized that to get help was, probably impossible under the circumstances, unless he sent to distant towns—hundreds of miles away. Even then it would perhaps be impossible without his going himself, and in the mean time Edith—— He could not risk delay, or such chance. He would find Edith himself! He would settle with that base hound himself! In a lawless country, deprived of the aid and protection of the law, he would take the affair into his own hands, and punish Billford according to his crimes. At that moment he understood and sympathized with the causes and motives that led to lynchings.

But he must try and procure a guide that knew the country, if only this boy. He proposed it hurriedly.

"Your boy looks strong and active. If he knows the country and will guide me, I'll pay him well—anything you ask."

"He don't know it very well; we ain't been here long, and b'sides, he's a goin' with me. Anyhow, I don't know what he'd be a'gittin' into; you ain't told me what was goin' on."

"There's underhanded villainy going on! That sandy-haired scoundrel that was bothering about Miss Swainfurth has lured her away with a lying note——"

"Oh, yes, I saw him; I saw ye both," she broke in with a sly laugh. "I knowed you both was sweet on the girl. And he's got away with her, has he? It's a cute trick, an' she's in it, too, like as not. Purty girls are so frisky with the fellers. And they're havin' a good time a'hikin' it to the diggin's, and laughin', knowin' you'd be a'fumin' and stewin' around.'

Felton scowled in disgust at this caricature of the sincere, true-hearted girl, but ignored it saying:

"I'll give Jimmy a dollar to take me to the spot where he last saw Miss Swainfurth."

"Ye must have dollars to burn," she cackled. "The hull caboodle of ye's the queerest outfit, anyhow, 't ever struck Sandburg; 'less—mebbe you and the old 'eller's on the trail of another gold field." she insinuated this with a suggestive pause and a manner meant to be humorously sarcastic.

Felton turned away, determined to waste no more time on her; and she added, seeing the dollar vanishing:

"The boy c'n go that fur with ye. And ye come right back, Jimmy; ye know the cart'll be along d'rectly," she screeched after them.

Felton rushed away diagonally, skirting the town, the shortest route to the railroad, at a trot that kept the boy on the jump.

"Say, mister, he panted, with a snicker, "be ye goin' to sprint it this a-way till ye ketch 'em? Yer mighty long-winded as well as long-laiged, if ye do, seein' they've got such a start of ye."

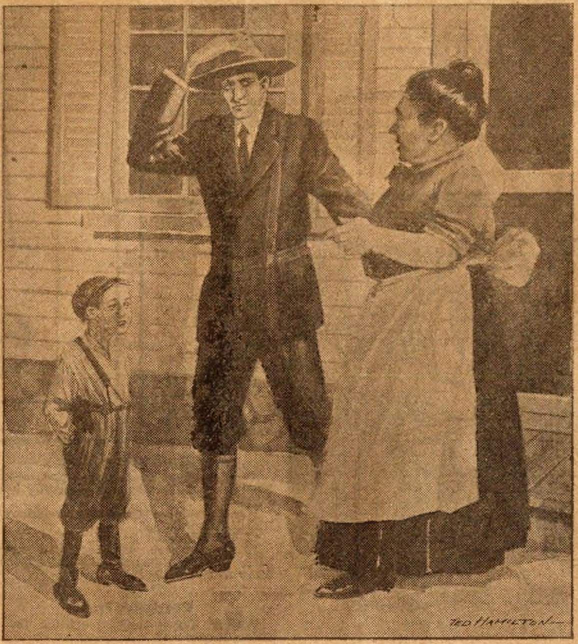
Felton slowed to a rapid walk, asking: "Can you tell me just when Miss Swainfurth went?"

"It was day before yisterday, to'ards night."

"Are you sure of the time?" Felton insisted.

"Course! It was past train time long enough so's everybody hit the trail for the diggin's when that feller come. An' she went away with him right off, an' they hiked out o' sight 'round that curve yander."

If the boy was right, Billford had escaped early in the day after he, Felton, had gone, and found his way out immediately. He remembered, with hot disgust at his own lack of cunning, that he had rushed away that morning without examining if Billford's bonds were secure.



"The boy can go that far with you."

When they reached the curve where the railroad turned around one of the great foothills, and on out of sight, Felton paused, saying:

"Do any of the Indians live off this way?"

"Naw. Don't nothin' live off this way 't I ever heard. The Injuns are away over yander side the lake summers. I dunno jist where, I ain't ever bin to 'em cause ma she's feared of 'em. But they don't hurt nobody; I've seen 'em in town."

"Did Miss Swainfurth go away with an Indian? And was he a man or boy?" Felton asked.

"It was a man. I didn't see 'im clost, but he looked like a half-breed or Mexican, and he wusn't dressed like the Injuns."

"Do the half-breeds and Mexicans live with the Indians?" Felton demanded.

"I dunno. They live out that way summers. I gotter go now mister, 'r ma'll be a-cavortin'!" He clutched his dollar with a grin, and ran off.

CHAPTER XI.

BILLFORD AS A PROPHET.

Unless Edith had been decoyed upon a train and taken to one of the miserable water stations, the start in this direction was only a blind, for, as Felton knew, the railroad was but a branch leading to a mining section some hundreds of miles distant, with no stations larger than Sandburg in all the stretch of desert. There was only one train daily that carried passengers, which were scarce as hen's teeth ordinarily, those arriving now being the result of the gold boom, and they set off at once across the desert for the new Eldorado.

Edith would never submit to such an abduction, nor could she be persuaded that, to reach her father she would have to take a train. She must be a prisoner among the Indians, where it was possible to procure food. There was no other place, unless Billford had found some cave or pit among the cliffs where she could be imprisoned. But whatever his object in luring her into his power, he would not dare to injure her. Against a surging fear, Felton assured himself of this over and over.

He left the railroad and cut across the country, determined to search every wigwam and hut in the Indian village, if at the point of his gun; and if he came across Billford, so much the better. One of them would fill a hole in the sand, and he did not think it would be he. Neither of them was much with a gun; neither had had occasion for it in his life, and in that respect were equal, but he, Felton, had right on his side.

By occasionally climbing one of the high, rocky hills that repeated themselves in bewildering confusion, he was enabled to get glimpses of the lake, and thus did not lose time in useless wandering. It was a toilsome journey in the hot sand, under the hot sun, and when he thought of Edith being subjected to the exhausting strain, he punctured the hot air with threats of vengeance.

On reaching the lake he doused his head and washed off some of the alkaline dust, got a drink from a small spring, and went on with renewed speed.

He had imagined the Indians as herding together in a half-human fashion, always in the midst of feasting, or on the verge of starvation, with surroundings of utmost squalor, and exclaimed in surprise, when late in the afternoon, from the summit of a hill over which the trail led, he viewed the village. It lay on the banks of a small river that ran through a little valley and emptied into the lake. Small ditches conducted the water through patches of grain and vegetables, in which a number of squaws seemed working. Down the valley, which disappeared in the windings of the hills, animals grazed, smoke curled up homelike, here and there. It was a scene of surprising beauty, after the arid desert, and Felton was cheered and encouraged, as he hastened down the hill.

Swarms of yapping curs heralded his coming, and the inhabitants began to appear as he entered the wide circle formed by the wigwams. He had no knowledge of Indian etiquette, but he was anxious to please, and make a good first impression, and with a smile meant to be propitiatory he extended his hand, saying "How!"

There was no response save indefinite, guttral grunts, which might or might not be the traditional "Ugh!" and the Indians ignored his hand with sullen

(Continued on page thirteen.)

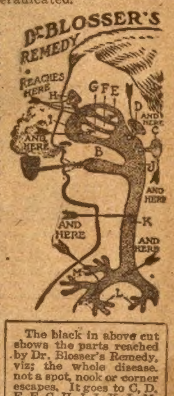
Herb Smoke for Catarrh.

A Simple, Safe, Reliable Way and It Costs Nothing to Try.

This preparation of herbs, leaves, flowers and berries (containing no tobacco or habit-forming drugs) is either smoked in an ordinary clean pipe or smoking tube, and by drawing the medicated smoke into the mouth and inhaling into the lungs or sending it out through the nostrils in a perfectly natural way, the worst case of Catarrh can be eradicated.

It is not unpleasant to use, and at the same time it is entirely harmless, and can be used by man, woman or child.

Just as Catarrh is contracted by breathing cold or dust and germ-laden air, just so this balmy antiseptic smoking remedy goes to all the affected parts of the air passages of the head, nose, throat and lungs. It can readily be seen why the ordinary treatments, such as sprays, ointments, salves, liquid or tablet medicines fail—they do not and can not reach all the affected parts.



The black in above cut shows the parts reached by Dr. Blosser's Remedy, viz; the whole disease. not a spot, nook or corner escapes. It goes to C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, EVERYWHERE, and it wipes out the disease wherever it goes.

If you have catarrh of the nose, throat or lungs, choking, stopped-up feeling, colds, catarrhal headaches; if you are given to hawking and spitting, this simple yet scientific treatment should cure you.

An illustrated book which goes thoroughly into the whole question of the cause, cure and prevention of catarrh will, upon request, be sent you by Dr. J. W. Blosser, 27 Walton Street, Atlanta, Ga.

He will, also, mail you five days' free treatment. You will at once see that it is a wonderful remedy, and as it only costs one dollar for the regular treatment, it is within the reach of everyone. It is not necessary to send any money—simply send your name and address and the booklet and free trial package will be mailed you immediately.

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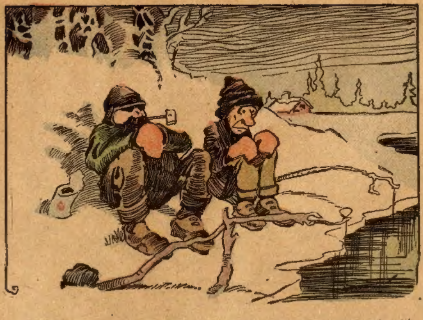


First Fisherman—"Why, yes, I told my wife I'd go to church today, but it's so derned cold in church sech weather as this is I dursen't risk it."

Candid About It.

He—"If I was rich, darling, would you love me more than you do?"

She—"Well, I might not love you any more; but I would look forward to our wedding day with a great deal more impatience than I do at present."

◆

A Dig at Dubbleigh.

Dubbleigh—"Yes, I was going abroad, but I—aw—changed my mind, you know."

Miss Keen—"Well, I do hope you got a better one in the change, Mr. Dubbleigh."

Neat Housekeeping.

Neat Housekeeper—"Have you dusted this parlor?"

Domestic—"Yes, mum."

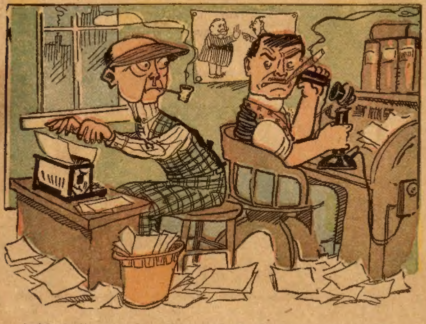
Neat Housekeeper—"Well, it doesn't look so. Dust it again, and breathe hard while you're doing it."

◆

A Mysterious Phenomenon.

"Do you believe in reincarnation?"

"I am tempted to. All the relatives whose funerals my employes attend during the baseball season reappear before winter."



Assistant—"A woman has written asking how to remove paint spots."
Editor—"Tell her to wash her face."

What He's Going to Give Up.

"For ten years I have been trying to give up smoking."

"That so?"

"Yes, but this year I am going to give up trying."

A Definition.

Little Willie—"What is a lawyer, pa?"

Pa—"A lawyer, my son, is a man who induces two other men to strip for a fight and then runs off with their clothes."

Clever Maud.

"Isn't Maud the clever schemer?"

"What's she doing now?"

"Every windy day she fastens her second best hat on so insecurely that it blows off, and ever so many men run after it. Bella told me that Maud had already added five policemen, three newsboys, a truck driver and four miscellaneous men to her acquaintance list."

◆

Gilded Pets.

"Riches," said the ready made philosopher, have wings, disturb our rest and require constant care."

"I suppose so," replied Mr. Dustin Stax; "but human nature is human nature, and we will keep on wanting dollars the same as women want dogs and canary birds."

◆

He Agreed.

"What you need," said the wordy medic in his ponderous way, "is an enlargement of your daily round, a wider circle of activity."

"Mebby that's right," said the patient. "I'm a bareback rider in a one-ring circus."

◆

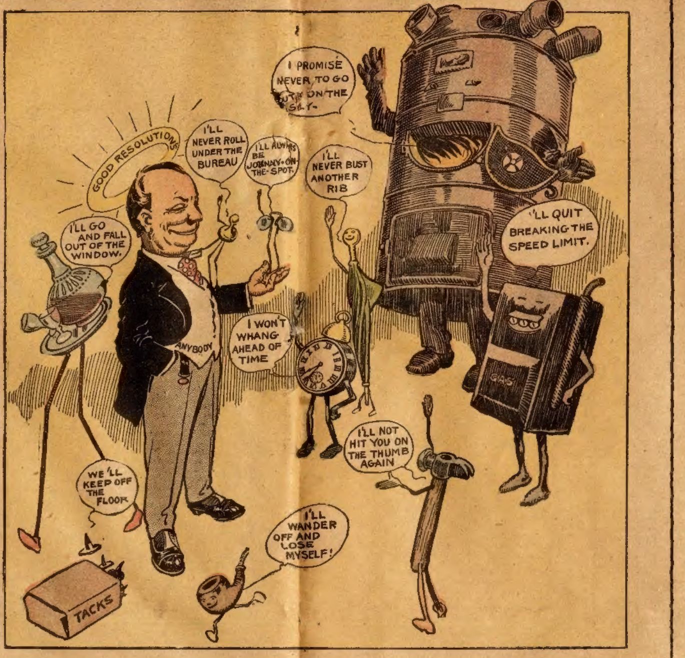
Big Hit.

Maud—"Miss Oldun thinks that hotel clerk just lovely."

Ethel—"Why so?"

Maud—"He wrote opposite her name on the hotel register, suite 16."

◆



GOOD RESOLUTIONS
I'LL GO AND FALL OUT OF THE WINDOW.
I'LL NEVER ROLL UNDER THE BUREAU
I'LL ALWAYS BE JOHNNY-ON-THE-SPOT.
I PROMISE NEVER TO GO [illegible] ON THE SKY.
I'LL NEVER BUST ANOTHER RIB
I'LL QUIT BREAKING THE SPEED LIMIT.
ANYBODY
I WON'T WHANG AHEAD OF TIME
WE'LL KEEP OFF THE FLOOR
I'LL NOT HIT YOU ON THE THUMB AGAIN
I'LL WANDER OFF AND LOSE MYSELF!
TACKS
GAS

He could keep his good resolutions—if certain co-operation could be secured.

Liked Literary Men.

Young Author (engaging board)—"You have several literary men boarding here, I believe."

Mrs. Slimdiet—"Yes, quite a number. I like literary men."

"I am delighted to hear it."

"Yes, you see, literary men never kick when I demand cash in advance. They are used to it."

◆

Conclusive Proof.

Waiter (mysteriously)—"Send for a detective quick!"

Head Waiter—"What's up?"

"See that woman over there? She's a man in disguise."

"Phew! How d'ye know?"

"She ordered a reg'lar square meal, an' gave me a tip."

Business for Father.

The small daughter of a practicing physician, who evidently has an eye to business, told her mother, in no uncertain terms, that she must call at once on their new neighbor.

"And why must I call on her?" asked the mother, amused at the child's positiveness.

"Well, in the first place," explained the little lady, "they've got three of the scrawniest kids, and the mother herself don't look very strong."

◆

Glad Prospect.

"I hear they're going to have moving pictures in the schools," said one youth.

"Yes," replied the other. "If they keep on making our studies so entertaining recess will seem fearfully monotonous."

A Double Pity.

Edith—"Isn't it a pity that poor fellows don't know enough to remain single?"

Ethel—"Yes; and that rich fellows do."

◆

Nowadays.

"They say a man is known by his associates."

"Yes; or, if he isn't known, he is at least suspected by them."

As to Their Expensiveness.

Jack—"I called on my fiancee this afternoon and found her out."

Tom—"You were lucky. Many fellows don't find their fiancees out until after marriage."

◆

She Got Him Some Pie.

The Lady—"You here again? Didn't I give you some biscuits yesterday?"

The Tramp—"Yes, mum; but it don't take so long to eat your biscuits as it do some other people's."

◆

A MILD REQUEST.

You may at times be forced to frown
On our most cherished plan.
But, little New Year, let us down
As easily as you can.

Pharisee.

A Swansea Sunday School teacher recently asked her class for a definition of the word Pharisee. One bright little chap answered:

"I expect he's a horse."

"Why, what makes you think that?" asked the teacher, very much surprised.

"Well, because the Lord said, 'Whoa unto him,'" was the reply.

◆

A Delightful Reminiscence.

Mrs. Gotham—"What did you most enjoy during your trip abroad?"

Miss Flightie—"My visit to the home of Thomas Carlyle."

"You did?"

"Yes, indeed. The handsomest young man I ever saw was watching me when I wrote my name in the visitor's book."

He Knew.

The incident occurred in the mission Sunday school. The subject of the lesson was "The Second Commandment" and the teacher began with the question:

"Have we any idols in this country?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered little Jakey Harris. "My father's idle, and my uncle, too."

◆

Was Slow.

"Do you remember the first time I ever put my arms around you?" he asked, after they had started on their honeymoon.

"I shall never forget," she replied.

"What did you think?"

"I thought you had fooled away a lot of time over the preliminaries."

◆

Casual Chat.

"Father," said Gladys Gwendolin, "Baron Fucash has proposed for my hand again."

"You mean he still wants to marry you?"

"Oh, no. I think I must have looked rather bored and he was trying to make conversation."

◆

Undecided.

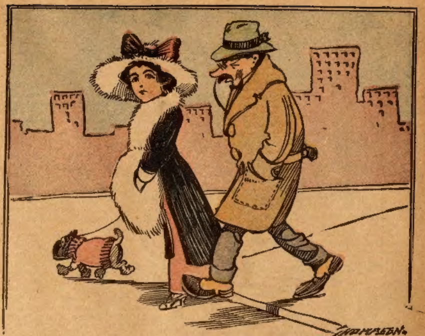
"Hear you have a fine baby at your house."

"Yep; bouncing boy."

"Whom does he look like?"

"Well, we haven't quite decided as yet. To tell the truth, none of our relatives has very much coin."

◆



Miss Pipp—"New Year's resolutions mean nothing."
Mr. Papp—"Oh, I don't know. I quit smoking New Year's Day and I didn't smoke that day either."

Cause to Swear.

Spurgeon was once asked if the man who learned to play a cornet on Sunday would go to Heaven.

The great preacher's reply was characteristic. Said he:

"I don't see why he should not, but"—after a long pause—"I doubt whether the man next door will."

◆

A Painful Subject.

Mr. Shortcash—"I shall feel greatly honored if you will accompany me to the theater this evening."

Miss Beauty—"With pleasure. What is the bill for tonight?"

Mr. Shortcash (absently)—"About—ten—dollars."

His Resolution.

"Are you going to make a New Year resolution?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Meekton. "Henrietta has suggested that I ought to. So I'm going to be kind and considerate, and not find fault with her for spending her money at bridge parties or her time at problem play matinees."

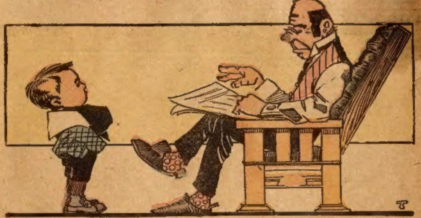
◆

Making It Right.

Lady (at fashionable ball)—"Do you know that ugly gentleman sitting opposite to us?"

Partner—"That is my brother, madam."

Lady (in confusion)—"Ah, I beg your pardon. I had not noticed the resemblance."



Johnnie—"Pa, what's the meaning of the phrase 'The long and the short of it?'"

Father—"I don't know anything about the long; but the short of it is right after Christmas."

An Eye to Business.

"Son, would you like to see your name written high on the scroll of fame?"

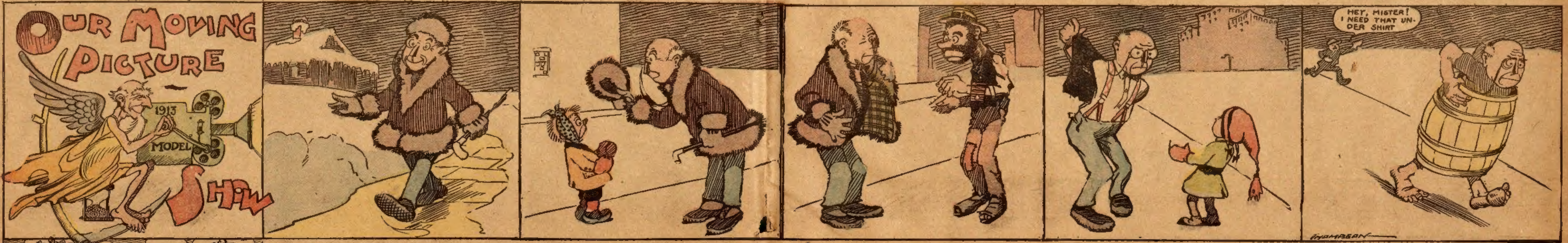
"No, pa; I'd like to see my name stamped on some domestic article that no family could do without."

Nothing Doing.

"How would you like to join our athletic club?"

"It wouldn't be worth while. I am drinking very little now and I expect to swear off entirely the first of the year."

DOING GOOD.



Mr. Goodthinge—"Ah, 'tis New Year's. I resolve not to refuse a request for charitable aid during the year. It will do me good."

"Say, mister, me knob's cold. Couldn't yer gimme that there cap?
Mr. G.—"Certainly, my boy."

Wandering Waldo—"I was run over by an arioplane and lost me coat. Could youse lend me that one till I get to me tailor?"

"Say, mister, my paw ain't got any west. Youi'n 's just his size," etc.

Mr. G.—"Well, I was right. It certainly has 'DONE me GOOD'."

Jury Duty

By Walter A. Sinclair

JURY NOTICE

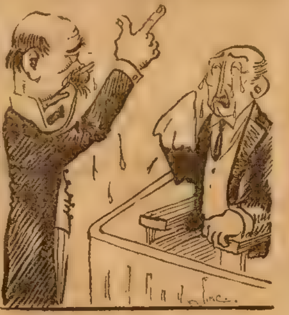
JURY duty is a refined way of giving the common person the hoot. In order to prevent the average yokel from taking it peevishly, he is slammed a dozen at a time. Before this is done, however, he is put through the rushy-bucktoo, and reduced to an amateur frazzle by the most approved legal methods.

A juror is the toy of lawyers and the football of higher courts. If he passes through this rough stuff, he has to encounter the loose footwork of a Governor. Meanwhile learned highbrows moan aloud over the coyness of men to submit to juryology. Most human bipeds would rather be defendants than join the thin, red-faced line of heroes who support our creaky jury system.

Zobs who can shuffle off somebody else's mortal coil with a neat double shuffle, or who can trim a bank for the legal tender without even a hard look, find themselves up against a row of brass tacks when it comes to jury duty. It is one thing to croak a fellow sufferer, and quite another to pass the examination for feeble-mindedness which is the high jump for the talesman class.

Back when juries first were inflicted on a suffering world, somebody had a happy thought that it would be classy, in noosing a hemp cravat on a brother man, to drape the responsibility on twelve good men and true. Why the dozen, instead of eleven or thirteen, isn't clearer than mud, but no doubt some crude person in trade was guided by mercantile measurements in slipping it over, just like so many buns or lemons. If the inventor of the jury system had squeezed the list to eleven there would be more verdicts, for, if we inhale the news correctly, it is the obstinate twelfth juror who always balks and keeps the others away from the feathers all night.

It is with this long-eared pest in mind that the grouchy foreman of a jury, out over supper-time, ordered eleven suppers and a bale of hay. Still, holding out, solid as Gibraltar or as his own head, is the right of any man who has stood for fifty-seven varieties of insults in order to do his duty to the State or to the jury-fixer. Any boob who has lasted to the finals has a license to go the limit and get hunk by being as contrary as March 4th weather, in giving the other eleven the frosty phiz. Leaning one on the snoot of the lawyer who was most pestiferous in examining talesmen is the only solace peddled to jurors.



Wad of weeps.

Getting on a jury is the hardest job for those who want on, and the softest for those who like it about as much as they do the cholera. Getting the gate is an auto of a different tint. The law jugglers make it equally difficult for the willing and the dodgers to drop through the trapdoor after being shrunk to the last quarter-size.

In the first place, jurors are drawn. Then they are quartered and boiled in oil. The process of drawing jurors is not so artistic as it sounds. One needs no studio training to draw a juror.

After somebody has snagged the names out of a cheesebox on a pivot, all that is necessary to send them over the jumps is for some sloppy worker in homicide or the more paying lines of crime to get indicted and brought to trial. Of course, only careless workers skid on the turn and land at the bar. However, consider the false alarms over and the trial teetering along. Burdened with a notice to appear for jury duty, the unfortunate staggers into a courtroom sardined with friends of the accused, roughnecks, and other butt-inskis. The talesmen are allowed to dangle around the walls until some spectators get thirsty, and then the browbeating begins.

The forsaken talesman, toddling into the full calcium of publicity, steps on his feet and sits down on his hat. Under the accusing glare of judge and lawyers, he is opened up and turned inside out, so that all may gaze on his mechanism. The murderer on trial has the constitutional right to impersonate an oyster, but not so the saddings who has been called to be a sovereign juror.

Fine-combing the guy's scenario, the law sharks prong up his slips on life's toboggan, and his having known several rough customers who landed in the stone boobyhatch. The fact that the slips were in careless-footed youth, and that he had no advantage tip that his friends would get pinched, makes no never mind. The talesman isn't there so much to qualify as a juror as to let some lawyer whet up his wits for the slambang stuff he's going to pull when the witnesses come on for their act.

Prunes who have kept their lives neatly cooped under a pint get an awful jolt when some legal light or lightweight begins prying around to find what their business is, whom they strike mitts with, where they frivol away their time, and what they think about the weather.

If they fumble the conversational ball, the unhappy marks raise a string of yips out of the legal vivisector who is cracking the whip, and the poor dubs have to stand for a lacing without the chance of a hot come-back. Just supposing that he squeaks he has read a nibble of the case, which has erupted on all front pages of the newspapers. Does the talesman get a medal for being up to snuff? He gets a wallop on the dignity for daring to have snooped into the papers to wise up on what everybody has doped out.

And if, on the other pie-grabber, he never heard a verse of it before, the legal talent features a large hunk of suspicion that he's been fixed, and is trying to ring in to hang the jury. There's no pleasing the extremely cross examiners.

For instance, if he dares breathe a snort that he is opposed to capital punishment, what then? The wheezy and venerable old gent on the crow's nest unbelts a bellow of unbelief at such noise, for he has been shooting specimens of genus homo to the third-rail chair or the rope necktie for twenty years without feeling a twitter of conscience, except on bad nights, and he takes occasion to square himself with the still, small voice by cracking about the law being the sole representative of the Grim Reaper Trust, whereas he knows it takes a good journeyman executioner to put a period to a death sentence.

Having been frisked for mental scrap and found overstocked, the talesman is dumped into the coal chute, returning shame-faced to the world where he once was an honored plumber or respected grocer, never again looking quite the same as before the taxidermists removed his pelt.

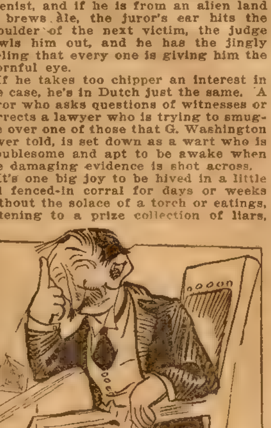
Despite all efforts to discourage the simps, twelve jurors manage to crowd into the box, although it frequently exhausts the panel and every one else

Then a terrible Sahara of words confronts the misguided dozen. Words, words everywhere, and not a stop to think. Boneheads who can't remember what their wives told them to bring home at night, and who do the best they can by bringing souses, are expected to remember the long-winded, complicated crime which the prosecution promises to unwind before their very ears. To make their cup of joy bead on the outside, the judge orders them cooped up during the trial. One of the things which makes men just feverish for jury duty is to see jurors hurled under guard, away from home and dear ones, while the defendant is reveling by night and tinting the village vermilion.

Old snoozers, who enjoy forty or forty-one winks during the day, have their goats grabbed by a beef from the presiding mourner, who discovers them gently tearing off a young snore when they should be listening to some old slumber pill styling himself an alienist. Just as the juror is wondering what ails the alienist, and if he is from an alien land or brews ale, the juror's ear hits the shoulder of the next victim, the judge bawls him out, and he has the jingly feeling that every one is giving him the scornful eye.

If he takes too chipper an interest in the case, he's in Dutch just the same. A juror who asks questions of witnesses or corrects a lawyer who is trying to smuggle over one of those that G. Washington never told, is set down as a wart who is troublesome and apt to be awake when the damaging evidence is shot across.

It's one big joy to be hived in a little old fenced-in corral for days or weeks without the solace of a torch or eatings, listening to a prize collection of liars, perjurers, and assorted mutilators of the truth spouting reels of tripe that Ananias wouldn't have had the nerve to spring. Particularly if one's neighbor in the box is prejudiced against connecting with the suds.



Tearing off a young snore.

If the jurors are locked up they spend their time, when not at the lie-fest, in hurling hotel cooking into tummies that don't understand French, getting trimmed at poker nights, and reading open-work newspapers, all slashed up on the bias to prevent the jurors having any bias. During this frabjous time, the juror begins wondering if his business or job will speak to him again; if his wife has got a divorce alleging abandonment and if the baby he left has begun to shave yet. Fortunately, about the time the jurors begin to feel that Robinson Crusoe had nothing on them, the case begins to squeak and run down.

The jury, which has been snubbed worse than a social climber, now gets as much attention as a newly elected President. Spattering floral tributes at the jurors on their intelligence, the lawyers lambaste the ozone trying to hand out their points in First Reader words. The Niobe for the defense cuts an onion bringing out the weeps, and jurors are encouraged to use up a large wad of cries. This proves absolutely 0, because jurors have been known to sop up a few briny tears, step into the juryroom, and soak the prisoner.

Staggering in a tornado of words, the jurors are allowed to slink out of sight before getting busy. Somebody suggests they ought to surround one more set of eats on the county—and they do. Ducking into the juryroom they go through the motions of deliberating, having made up their minds before the trial began. If somebody holds out, then, business of talking him insensible, or persuading him with a table leg. Staying out all night in a juryroom is one of the jolliest ways not so spend the dark hours.

When they prance in with a verdict the jurors resemble cats with canary table d'hotes, thinking they have done something to help the law. But when they see a higher court perforate their verdict or a Governor pardon the hick they skagged, they begin to ask, "Why is a juror?"

Answer—He isn't.

* * *

Alice Clement, Detective.

(Contined from page seven.)

standing with his hands tightly clenched behind him. It was time for work—quick work! A portiere cord was hanging near. Noiselessly I released it and fashioned an end into a noose. Then slowly, talking to him all the time, I began to approach.

"He did not seem to hear—at least he gave no evidence. I was within five steps of him now. My revolver I had slipped into my pocket where the butt could hang in easy reach of my hand. The noose was extended, ready to be slipped over the waiting hands.

"Two steps more and I would be with him. I coughed, that I might cover the sound of my steps. I dared say nothing that would cause him to turn now. The folded hands showed before me. I made my spring, a quick jerk, and bound the wrists!

"Like an animal, snarling, cursing, he turned. His great shoulders heaved as he struggled to release himself from the bonds which secured his hands. His eyes glistened now with the fires of fury

"'You—you traitress!' he whipped out at me. 'You——!'

"'I am trying to save you from murder,' I cried.

"With a sudden movement he lunged forward and rushed at me, his bound hands still struggling. I sprang to one side, I jerked forth my revolver, whirled it high, and sent the butt crashing down upon his head as he passed. He hurtled to the floor, he struggled a moment, then lay still."

The freighter was gone now. Alice Clement looked about her with the manner of some one pleased at the passing of an unwholesome experience.

"That's about all," she concluded, "except that by some quick work I got a policeman into the room soon enough to catch the blackmailer, take the credit for both arrests, and keep my name out of connection with the thing. And I've got this to say for Rogers—he was game enough to go on through with his confession, once he had made it to me. Oh, for goodness sake, I never——"

"What?" I asked with a turn of my head.

"Too late now," said Miss Clement with that old, happy smile on her face; "but it was funny. That fellow on the green bench over by the statue just kissed his girl, and she gave him a slap in the face."

Next week's Ledger will contain another of these strange, true stories of Alice Clement, the famous Chicago detective. It will be called, "The Invisible Clew." Read it.

* * *

Merely Preliminaries.

"Can't you get any work?"" asked a woman of the tramp who had applied at the back door for food.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied. "I was offered a steady job by the man who lives down the road in that big white house."

"That's Mr. Oatseed. What was the work?"

"He wanted me to get up at four in the morning, milk seventeen cows, feed, water, and rub down four horses, clean the stables, and then chop wood until it was time to begin the day's work."

"What did he want to pay?"

"I dunno, ma'am. I didn't stop to ask."

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Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain will do it. Just apply once a month with your comb. Gives any shade from light brown to black, and its use can not be detected. Does not soil scalp or hands. A perfect remedy for gray, faded or bleached hair. $1 at drug stores. Send 25c for trial bottle.
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Agent's Directory List, Indiana, Pa.

The Abnormal Thing.

(Continued from page nine.)

faces. They were hostile to him, Felton feared, but he persisted, and approaching one of the foremost, an old man of dignified appearance he again offered his hand, repeating the "How?" which he supposed was the right thing in Indian salutation. The brave drew himself up and replied in broken, but understandable English:

"Eagle Plume takes not the hand that strikes in the dark."

Felton was astonished, but answered quickly: "Eagle Plume does right, but he can take this hand. It has never struck a coward's blow in the dark, and the man that owns it would cut it off sooner than let it do so." He had unconsciously adopted the Indian's stilted style of speech.

"A tongue that speaks double—was it not so foretold, my brothers?" Eagle Plume looked about at his companions.

"It was so foretold; and the double-tongue speaks fair, while the heart is evil," one answered.

"Much evil has been wrought us, is it not so my brothers?" Eagle Plume asked again, looking around again for confirmation.

"It is so," several voices said gruffly.

"And much evil is working, even to our destruction, is it——"

"But look here!" Felton broke in, somewhat exasperated by his reception and the delay, "Look here, I have done you no evil! I have never been to your village before, have never seen one of you before, I have done no evil. I come to you because a great evil has been done to me. I come to ask your help to overthrow that evil——"

"So it was foretold that the double-tongue would speak, seeking to ensnare us in a net to justify the evil done, and the evil to be done—was it not so foretold, my brothers?"

"It was so foretold," echoed like a chorus.

The Indians glowered at him menacingly; the squaws from fields and huts crowding around, tiptoeing, and craning to glare at him. Plainly the whole village considered him an enemy, and one, it seemed, of whom they had been warned.

The bucks, or men, had appeared almost in a body from a larger, centrally placed wigwam, as if they had been awaiting him. They had manifested no surprise at seeing him, and they had at once surrounded him, and slowly forced him to the center of the space in the circle of huts. It was as if they meditated an attack upon him.

In his various undertakings in search of "stories," Felton had had some rough-and-tumble experiences with the hoodlum element; had bluffed his way out of dangerous situations, through hooting rabbles; but that was on his own ground, and in circumstances with which he was familiar. Here, he had neither precedent nor knowledge to guide him. He felt instinctively that no bluff he could put up would pass; and in an actual fight he would stand no chance at all against so many. He was isolated, and virtually a prisoner. He recognized that the situation had been planned and perfected by Billford with more cunning and sharpness than he had given him credit for.

What he could not understand was, how Billford had contrived to fasten upon himself the charge of having worked evil to the Indians—of being a worker of evil against them. But however it had been done, they were completely antagonistic, the situation was serious, if not actually dangerous. His only hope was in placating them somehow.

"But see,' he pleaded, throwing out empty hands to them," I come to you peaceably. I have done you no harm, I intend you no harm. Would I come to you thus if I did?"

"So came the chief worker of evil—is it not so my brothers?" interposed Eagle Plume.

"It is so," they answered.

"Listen to me—believe me. Oh Eagle Plume!" Felton cried. "I repeat—a great evil has been done me. Listen, and I will tell it to you, and show you that I meditate no evil to you and your people, but that I come to you for help."

"Speak, double-tongue!" said Eagle Plume. "We listen, knowing it is but to cover the evil you would do us—so it was foretold. Is it not so my brothers?"

"It is so!"

A low, sneering laugh mingled with the response, a sound that made Felton start, the hot blood surging into his face. His fists clenched involuntarily, at the instant, as his angry eyes swept the circle, they encountered the stealthy, intent gaze of a comely young squaw on the outer edge, who made a swift, almost imperceptible sign of warning. A friendly sign! Felton looked again eagerly, inquiringly, but the girl had shrunk behind the older women as if she feared detection. Taking the hint that he was not to attract attention to her, Felton let his gaze travel slowly over the faces massed about him, as if seeking to read them, while he thought hard.

The girl's sign was a warning, but of what? Was he to desist in his attempts to explain his errand, or was it of caution against losing his temper, and so further irritating them. The last, he quickly decided, and it was prompted by the girl's pity for one at so great odds. She probably knew better than he could imagine, what would be his fate if they broke loose upon him. But the laugh! Again, he clenched his fists in the effort to restrain himself—the sneering, triumphant laugh meant that Billford was an amused spectator of the scene, and was reaping a harvest of enjoyment! Perhaps Edith herself, a helpless captive, keeping an enforced silence, was obliged to witness his defeat, and the failure of his efforts at rescuing her.

He determined to abandon all affectation and speak to the waiting Indians as man to man; and with an air of frank confidence he told them of Edith's disappearance, how the poor girl had been lured away by a lie. He told them openly that she was his promised wife, and that the man who had entrapped her was a rejected suitor who had taken this way of revenging himself upon the girl. He described his own great anxiety for her welfare, and explained that he had come to them because he had hoped to find her safe among them. He vowed that he would far sooner that she was a prisoner in the hands of honorable, upright men, such as were his Indian brothers, than that she should be in the wilds alone in the power of the villain who had stolen her. He begged them to believe him, to test him, to send a swift runner to the village and make inquiries. They would hear that he was speaking truth—they would hear of the wise old man who studied the rocks and——

The Indians had listened intently, at times exchanging glances he could not interpret, but at this point they surged angrily about him, their harsh gutturals drowning his words. The young squaw flashed a glance of dismay, even alarm, upon him and disappeared.

"Is it not even as I foretold, my red brothers?" a mocking voice questioned, and Billford stepped out of the larger wigwam, pushed through, and facing Felton regarded him with a malevolent gleam in his slant eyes.

"It is even as you foretold, white brother," Eagle Plume assented. "He comes with the double-tongue, and by smooth speaking seeks to gain entrance for himself into our wigwams, that he may complete the evil——"

"Is it true, my red brothers, that you have a pale-faced girl a prisoner in your wigwams?" Billford interrupted Eagle Plume.

"It is but the lying speech of the double-tongue, my brothers. No pale-faced squaw has ever entered our village," Eagle Plume declared, with the voice of truth. "Is it not so, my brothers?" Again he appealed to the Indians.

"It is so," they returned

Felton's heart sank. He could but believe them, and he had meant it when he said he hoped to find Edith with them. Billford was not to be trusted, and that he had her in his power somewhere was plain, his whole bearing reeked with insolent triumph.

"Even as has come to pass this which I foretold, so will come to pass all that I have foretold, if the workers of evil be not destroyed," Billford asserted oracularly to Eagle Plume. "I have shown you the way to compass it. Will you still refuse?"

There were indistinct mutterings, then Eagle Plume replied, as if reiterating a former decision:

"As my brother knows, we be but old men. When our youths, our strong young men return from the chase they will do even according to the word of our white brother."

A flash of quickly subdued impatience swept Billford's face, but he said, insinuatingly:

"If my red brothers wait the return of their young men, will they then release this double-tongued worker of evil, that he may pursue his way——"

A wolfish snarl interrupted him, and Eagle Plume declared significantly: "We will not release the double-tongued worker of evil. He also waits the return of our young men."

Billford laughed slyly, saying: "It is well, my red brothers."

Then he turned mockingly to Felton. "I am something of a prophet, as you see, Felton, and I foretell for you a tedious and unpleasant exit from this orb, accompanied by your co-worker of evil, the renowned Professor, leaving to me the congenial task of consoling one, who is even now removed from your biasing influence, on the road to consolation."

The continuation of this remarkable story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

Use of an Engagement Ring.

Two young women rode into Boston from Newton on an Oak Square car. They were very chummy and punctuated a lively conversation by pecking at a box of chocolates in a kind of "one for me and one for you" style. It was just after Christmas, and it was natural that the conversation should have much to do with that day. It rattled on like this:

"Bessie has a diamond ring!" This was said with the air of one imparting a profound secret.

"She has?" expressing great surprise. (Insert chocolates here.)

"Engagement, I s'pose? I've been expecting it."

"Yep."

"Christmas present?"

"Yep."

More rumination on chocolates and also thought.

"I don't like it. This making a diamond engagement ring a Christmas present."

"Why?"

"Why? It looks to me like killing two birds with one stone, don't you think?"

More chocolates.

* * *

Disappointments.

"Everybody has had his disappointments," said the ready-made philosopher.

"That's right," replied the everyday person. "Nearly every man I know would rather be a successful ball player than what he is."

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I ask for no deposit. You will not be asked to sign anything—no obligation on your part to buy anything. There will be no express charges to pay for, I pay the postage myself, and deliver the package to your own door **without one cent of expense to you.** Again I say—**send no money.**

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Chicago Ledger

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Rules for Fathers.

Treat the bunch.

Don't ask what the baby looks like—we might tell you the truth and you'd be hurt.

When it begins to talk, gag it, so we won't have to hear its cute sayings.

If you can't gag the baby, gag yourself.

Remember that there have been fathers before. Not such happy fathers, of course, or such justly proud fathers, naturally, but fathers, just the same.

If the baby cries when we come to dinner, don't say, "She's usually so good." Or, "he," as the case may be. It's a fairy tale—you know it, and you know we know it! What's the use?

Don't ask us to hold it. We don't know how—we're afraid of it. Put it on the floor and let it kick.

Don't get mad when we say it looks like any other baby. It really does. They all do.

Don't expect us to look cheerful when it drops our watch and smashes it. You see, it's not our baby.

Pay no attention whatever to all our cynicism, be just as proud as you like—we're jealous, that's all.

No Love for Critics.

A musician, seated far out on a windswept pier at Atlantic City, was telling stories about composers.

"Dr. Richard Strauss," he said "visited America before he achieved world fame, and the sapient, cock-sure critics of New York were very hard on him. In fact they were so hard on him that Dr. Strauss has not yet either forgotten or forgiven them. The wound is still raw. It still bleeds."

The musician, regarding with an absent smile the slow, lazy graceful dives of a school of porpoises in the tumbling blue water, continued:

"I had the honor last year of attending one of Dr. Strauss' rehearsals in Munich. It was a new symphony; very beautiful, but very bizarre. In the middle of it the composer rapped his desk impatiently and called to the double bassoon:

"'Why don't you play the F sharp that is marked?'

"'Because it would sound wrong—that is why.'

Dr. Strauss gave a harsh laugh and shouted:

"'Himmel! Are you a New York critic in disguise?'"

Corn in Kansas.

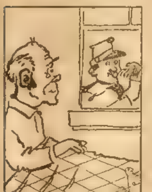
The big corn yield in Kansas this past fall recalls the story of the big Kansas corn at the Philadelphia centennial. Among the Kansas agricultural exhibits at that fair was some corn on the stalks grown in the Neosho River bottoms. It was twenty feet high and the ears looked as long as stove wood.

And old lady from Vermont gazed at it and declared that the stalks were spliced. Then she took another look and changed her mind. "But," said she, "it didn't grow that big in one year. It must have grown for two seasons."

The man in charge of the Kansas exhibit was somewhat of a prevaricator himself. "Lady," said he in great solemnity, "we are almost ashamed to exhibit the corn. This has been a hot, dry year in Kansas and we have not been able to raise large corn. But we felt it wouldn't do to have a Kansas exhibit without corn, so we brought this little stuff along. In a really good year the corn grows so high in Kansas that eagles build their nests in the tassels, knowing full well that they are out of range of the farmers' guns."

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

A Discordant Band.



Pat O'Shaunessy had been told by the doctor that he could live but a few hours, and his wife and assembled relatives and friends asked him whether there was one last wish he would like to have gratified.

"There is," said Pat. "I'd like to hear the village band playing once again."

Accordingly the village band gathered. When at last it had played, "Say Au Revoir, but Not Good-by," and had taken its own departure, Mrs. O'Shaunessy, kneeling at her husband's bedside, asked:

"Can ye die aisy now, Pat?"

"Yis," replied Pat. "I can die aisy now. Hell has nothing worse than that."

❧

High Flying.

Jules Vedrines, the world's champion aviator, complained in Chicago of America's indifference to aviation.

"The expense, perhaps, has something to do with it," he said. "Flying in America does, indeed, come high.

"I know a young Philadelphian who recently mastered the monoplane. With his mechanician he was flying to Atlantic City, when something went wrong near Tuckahoe, and they came down in a mosquito-infested field.

"The mechanician went to a hardware shop to buy a bolt.

"'A bolt like that?' said the hardware man, examining the mechanician's broken sample. 'Well, I guess I can give you a bolt like that for a quarter.' Then, suddenly he frowned. 'Hold on, though. You're an automobilist, ain't you? In that case it'll cost you $3.50.'

"But a raw-boned lad loafing in the shop gave a loud laugh and said:

"'He ain't no automobilist. He's a flyin'-machine man.'

"'In that case, stranger,' said the dealer quickly, 'the bolt will cost you $8, nett and nett.'"

❧

Willing to Work.

"Two wayside pilgrims were talking over things near Washington," says Judge, "when one of them asked:

"'Dick, you ain't a-hankerin' after no Government place, are ye?"

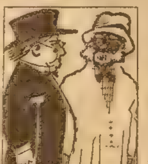
"'I don't mind sayin' I'd take one of 'em ef I could git it,' responded the other, 'but I don't want no job that's all fat. I'm willin' to earn my wages.'

"'An' what sort o' job would be about your size?"

"'Well, I'd like to fill fountain pens fur some Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.'"

❧

Very Comforting.



The late Senator Daniel of Virginia, who was being rallied at dinner on his sanguine outlook upon the political future of the Democratic party, said he was reminded of the cheerful philosophy of an old darky who drove the solitary hack in a small town on the Virginia shore, where he had spent the season.

In good weather, the Senator, who was lame, was its only patron, but in storms the old vehicle was so popular that he had narrowly missed several engagements, owing to the old man's taking more orders than one antiquated chariot could possibly fill.

One stormy night the Senator said: "Now, Jordan, be here tomorrow morning in time to take me to the 10 o'clock boat, without fail. I have an important engagement in Washington."

Jordan drove away, promising to show up in good season; but next morning a quarter of ten came—and no Jordan. Finally, at five minutes to ten, he drove up and the Senator climbed in and started on a mad race to the wharf, arriving there just in time to see the boat pulling out.

"Now, Jordan!" cried the exasperated Daniel, "I said we'd miss it!"

"Yes, suh, dat's so; but"—with sudden inspiration—"she ain't been long gone!"

❧

Which Way?

Miss Inez Milholland, the beautiful and aristocratic suffragette, detests the male flirt.

At a luncheon in Newport, a male flirt sneered at woman suffrage.

"Woman doesn't want to vote—she wants a husband," he said.

"Nonsense!" said Miss Milholland

"It's a fact," the flirt continued. "The way the average woman worships man is amazing. Why, I myself have turned about fifty women's heads."

"Away from you?" said Miss Milholland.

❧

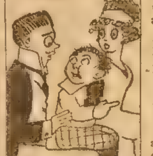
Yet So Different.

"Appearances are deceptive."

"They are," replied the man with a pained expression. "At first glance a dentist's chair looks very much like a barber's chair."

❧

Was He?



Senator Borah, who was talking at a dinner in Boise, told about an embarrassing question that had been asked at Chicago.

"The question," he said, smiling, "went unanswered. It was like little Willie's query.

"A young gentleman was spending the week end at little Willie's cottage at Atlantic City, and on Sunday evening, after dinner, there being a scarcity of chairs on the crowded piazza, the young gentleman took Willie on his lap.

"Then, during a pause in the conversation, little Willie looked up at the young gentleman and piped:

"'Am I as heavy as sister Mabel?'"

Tracing an Ancestor.

She—"How far can your ancestry be traced?"

He—"Well, when my grandfather resigned his position as cashier of a country bank they traced him as far as China, but he got away."

A Promised Reform.

Mrs. Hustler—"When women rule, there'll be no more of this 'wine, women, and song' thing."

Mr. Hustler—"No?"

Mrs. Hustler—"No; it'll be 'mirth, men, and music'."—Judge.

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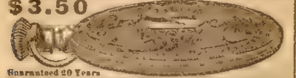

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Our Boys' Corner

Sandy of Catoctin

Or, Battling With Braddock

By Captain Jack Judson

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Begun in No. 51, December 21. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from newsstands, our agents or by mail from the office of publication.

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CHAPTER IV.

DISMISSED, BUT DEFIANT.

WHEN Sandy Gaver rose to his feet after being tripped by the vine in his headlong flight for life from the Indians who had surprised him at the spring, he gave himself up. Escape seemed hopeless, for his rifle was discharged, and there was no time to reload, so close upon him was the yelling horde.

Brandishing his weapon with the determination of selling his life as dearly as possible, he faced the savages, but at that moment the unexpected happened. From the dense wood to his left a volley was poured into the ranks of the foe, and several fell before the unerring rifles. The pursuit was halted, and before the Indians could seek cover more rifles spoke, and their speed was accelerated.

Out from among the trees rushed five-and-twenty of Washington's Virginians who had been on a night scout, and the overjoyed Sandy at once hastened to meet them. Already the discomfited foe had taken to their heels and were nowhere to be seen.

"Just in the nick o' time, eh?" exclaimed a gaunt rifleman, as Sandy took shelter among his preservers. "I guess as how you'd 'a' been done up in another minute?"

"That I would," was the reply. "The redskins interrupted my berry-picking and I had to run for it."

Sandy of course was profuse in his thanks for the rescue, and accompanied the riflemen back to camp.

He had barely thrown himself upon the ground for a rest when a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and he looked up into the face of one of General Braddock's aides.

"You are wanted forthwith at the General's tent," said the aide, and wondering what had occasioned the summons, Sandy rose and trotted off at the soldier's heels.

He found General Braddock seated at a camp table on which burned a candle supported by a bayonet, and the moment the commander set eyes on the young ranger trouble seemed in the air. General Braddock was always gruff, and especially to Americans, whom he despised.

"You've been out, sir?" grunted Braddock, looking the youth over from head to foot. "I hear you have drawn the enemy's fire without orders."

What could the young ranger say?

"It is true that I have encountered the enemy," he admitted, meeting Braddock's looks as calmly as possible. "Had I thought they were so near I would not have ventured to the spring."

"Of course not. You are hot-headed like all Americans, who think they can teach a British general how to fight in their infamous country."

Sandy felt his blood boil, and he was on the point of answering in kind, when he curbed himself.

"The foe seem to be closer than we suspect," he began, when the uplifting of a hand interrupted him.

"You have not been asked for a military opinion," put in Braddock. "You can go, sir."

The youth saluted, and was almost at the entrance, when the harsh voice shot out again.

"Understand me!" thundered Braddock, "I mean that you are dismissed from this army. You know the way home, and I command you to turn your face in that direction at once."

Sandy was thunderstruck. What! Go home after all his tramping through the forests, eager to help fight the foes of his king? Must he give up his cherished adventure and be disgraced forever in the eyes of the inhabitants of the valley of the Catoctin? It was not to be thought of.

He planted himself firmly in front of the obdurate officer and raised his hand. "I came out to fight the French and Indians," he said. "I do not want to go back."

"But we don't want such as you in our ranks," was the surly retort. "You are no better than these backwoods men who would teach me, General Edward Braddock, that I know nothing about war."

"But, sir——"

At that moment the curtains of the tent were raised, and Sandy saw the cold, hard, but triumphant face of Ross Gilbert.

"Ah, come in, Captain Gilbert!" exclaimed Braddock, catching sight of the newcomer. "You are always welcome where I am."

The suspected man came forward, but with his gaze still riveted upon Sandy.

"This young lout," continued the British general, "has been getting us into trouble. He would bring the redskins down upon us and disarrange my plans."

"What more could you expect of him?" sneered Gilbert.

"A boy is ever hot-headed," said Braddock. "I did not recruit this one, but he was anxious to join the expedition, and I listened to Colonel Washington."

Sandy was by this time fairly boiling with rage. He felt his blood seething in his veins.

"I want to fight," he put in at this juncture.

"But you ran!" cried Braddock.

"Who would not run with twenty redskins at his heels? I fancy that even a British soldier would have sought safety in fright had he been placed in the same predicament."

"There!" shouted the irate General, bringing his clenched hand with force down upon the table until the candle flickered. "I will not have the bravery of my soldiers called into question. Captain Gilbert, don't you think we have seen enough of this fellow?"

"Too much, I believe, General," was the reply.

All at once the quivering hand of the British general was directed toward the entrance.

"You are dismissed, sir!" he cried, "dismissed in disgrace!"

The smile of triumph broadened on Ross Gilbert's face.

"Listen to me, General Braddock," said Sandy, stepping back a pace. "As I have said, I came here to fight. I did not enlist in your regular army, but in Colonel Washington's detachment of Virginians. He is my commander."

"What insolence!" blurted Braddock, rising and coming round the table, his features flushed to the temples. "I will not have it!"

"I will not be driven off. I will not go back till this campaign is ended. It seems to me, sir, that you are trusting people who are in league with the enemy."

"What's that?"

"You have now in your command a man who meets Indian spies within your camp and sends them off with messages."

"Beware how you insinuate, young sir!"

"I do not insinuate, I accuse!" and the next moment the finger of the young ranger covered the white face of Ross Gilbert. "Yonder is the man I accuse. Ask him upon oath if he did not meet a Susquehanna Indian at Frederick, and send him to the west with tidings of your march. Ask him that, General Braddock, and see if he dare deny."

Slowly the gaze of Braddock wandered from the boy and alighted on the accused man. "You hear the young scamp, Captain Gilbert?" said he.

"Vaporings, mere vaporings," replied Gilbert, sneeringly. "I trust you have a better opinion of Ross Gilbert than that."

"So I have, my dear Captain," laughed Braddock. "You in collusion with a French spy? It is preposterous!"

"I still accuse that man," said Sandy. "What I see, I see."

Ross Gilbert broke into a laugh.

"You are exonerated without trial, Captain Gilbert," Braddock exclaimed. "Go, boy, for you cannot poison the ear of one of His Majesty's generals."

"I will go," replied Sandy, "but I will not leave the expedition. I am Colonel Washington's recruit, and under him will I serve, even if it be against your wish."

In another moment the heroic youth had lifted the curtains of the marquee and once more stood in the starlight.

"The traitor shall suffer for his treachery," said he to himself. "Some day General Braddock will learn that I have spoken the truth."

With this he moved toward his blanket, but all at once, catching sight of a glimmering light, he bent his steps in that direction.

"May I come in?" he asked, halting before the sputtering candle which revealed the handsome figure of Colonel Washington.

"Come in, my boy," responded a kindly voice. "Oh, you're the youth who joined us at Frederick?"

"I am Sandy Gaver, Colonel."

"And the boy who has just had an adventure with some Indians, as my men have reported."

"I am that boy, Colonel Washington. I have just been dismissed from the expedition by General Braddock."

A flash of resentment lit up the calm eyes of the young Virginian colonel.

"How dismissed?" he exclaimed. "You belong to my volunteer legion."

"I know that, Colonel."

"And General Braddock would deprive me of your services?"

"He has ordered me home."

The next moment Washington advanced, and Sandy felt his arm steal about him.

"But you shall not go home," said the young officer, in his gentle voice. "I will not have it. There is good steel in you, and I fancy your rifle will be needed in these Indian-infested forests before long. You are going to serve under me, my boy."

Tears stood in Sandy's eyes as he looked up into the young provincial's face.

"I will not go. I am going to fight with you, Colonel Washington!" cried he.

"Yes, we will fight together, no matter what General Braddock says," and Washington's hand smoothed Sandy's heated brow.

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CHAPTER V.

RASCALITY AFOOT.

Within the strong walls of old Fort Du Quesne, not many miles from the invading English army, the French were waiting for their foes. It was to be a death grapple in the wilderness, and an ill-fated one for the hot-headed Braddock. The French had for their allies hundreds of savages in war-paint, all eager to wield the tomahawk and scalping-knife, for their hatred of the Long Knives, as they called the whites, was intense.

Night had settled down over the scene, and the lilied flag of King Louis hung drooping from its staff. It was the night after Sandy's adventure at the spring, and Braddock had advanced but a few miles further through the forest.

A tall, dark-faced man clad in homespun garments, the leggings of which were fringed after the manner of the day, stood in the cozy quarters of the French commandant.

"You have done well, Captain Gilbert," said the Frenchman, looking up into the face before him. "I will see that my King suitably rewards you. We are going to draw this haughty Briton into a death-trap, and show him that France will never loosen her grip on the New World."

"That is it!" cried Ross Gilbert, with a smile. "General Braddock expects to annihilate your whole force."

"Just as if we intend to let him do it," was the reply.

"Colonel Washington commands the men who know how to fight your redskins. They are all backwoodsmen, and will meet the Indians at their own game."

"But Braddock is headstrong."

"He will take no advice from the young Virginia colonel."

"Then our victory is as good as won."

Gilbert stepped back and presently withdrew. The spy and traitor walked from the fort and encountered a young chief who had been waiting for him.

"Ah, Fox Tail!" cried the white man, reaching out his hand. "I am here."

"As Fox Tail sees," exclaimed the Indian.

"You know the bargain," continued the white villain. "The girl is not to be touched."

The Susquehanna inclined his head

"What about the young pale fox?" h asked.

Oh, the boy?" said Gilbert, with a littl laugh. "Braddock dismissed him from the army, but he took refuge with Colonel Washington, who protects him. H is going to remain with the army, an will fight with the Virginians."

"Then his scalp will hang from Fox Tail's belt."

"Come with me. We may be overhear here. I have a scheme which must be carried out before the great battle."

The pair walked away and halted ami some dense woodland.

"It is an easy trick," said Gilbert, after he had talked a while in low tones. "You can steal into the English camp and seiz the girl."

The Indian was silent.

"She sleeps in a small tent by herself, some distance from her father's. No on guards her, for a surprise is not expected."

"Fox Tail listens."

"Braddock is waiting for his wagons to come up," continued the white man "They will not be here for at least tw

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days. When they arrive he will move, and not before."

"Yes, white brother."

"I will see that the coast is clear tomorrow night. You have but to enter the camp and seize the white girl."

"And carry her to the fort?"

"No, no!" cried Gilbert, drawing back. "That would not do. One of these French officers might fall in love with her and disarrange all my plans. Not far from the fort, in the deep ravine, old Nokomis has her wigwam. She will take care of the white girl till after the battle, when there won't be no one to protect her from me."

A hideous grin suffused the redskin's features.

"You must use craft, Fox Tail. There must be no failure. The camp will be asleep except the guards, but you know how to steal past them. I trust you, Fox Tail."

"And the white man shall not trust Fox Tail in vain," was the quick response.

An hour later a solitary figure flitting through the gloomy forest penetrated to the English camp and entered General Braddock's quarters.

"What ho, my good Captain?" cried the officer, looking up as Gilbert parted the curtains. "You are my sleepless scout, and I am proud of you."

Ross Gilbert leaned against the camp table, and for a moment regarded Braddock in silence.

"The enemy suspects not," said he, with his lying tongue. "Fort Du Quesne lies at our mercy."

Braddock struck the table with his clenched hand.

"I thought so," he cried. "Colonel Washington has been telling me how to fight in this wild country, but I replied that he could not teach a British general."

"Which is true; he cannot."

"When we have taken the fort and annihilated the foe, we will root out the last French in America. You say the enemy suspects not?"

"They dream not of our nearness."

"How know you this, Captain?" and Braddock leaned forward and looked keenly at Ross Gilbert.

"I have been within the enemy's lines. In fact, I have seen the inside of the fort itself. Contrecouer, the Commandant, feels secure. I have counted his men and know them all. The Indians for once are oblivious of danger. They will run at the first fire."

"Good! You shall be rewarded for your faithfulness, Captain. I will mention you in my report, and say openly that to you I owe the victory over the French."

Not a muscle of the liar's face moved as he spun his lie.

"I thought you would come back tonight, and therefore I have waited for you," Braddock resumed. "Now, if you will let me get a little sleep, I will thank you."

A few yards from the marquee Ross Gilbert halted, and his face assumed an expression of triumph.

"The fool!" he cried, as he shut his hands. "He has been tolled into the death-trap, and in a few hours there will be no proud English army in this wilderness. As for Colonel Washington, he cannot save the day, for I have posted the redskins, and they will make short work of his buckskin riflemen."

When the speaker moved on a little figure rose from the ground and glided at his heels. Sandy Gaver had not been asleep, but had seen Gilbert enter Braddock's quarters, and, by creeping forward, had been enabled to overhear the conversation between the two.

Well did he know that this man was playing a double game. He had first spotted him at Frederick, as we have seen, and on several occasions since then he had had his suspicions confirmed. His gorge rose when he thought of the peril into which the fine army was rushing. If Ross Gilbert had really visited the French fort, as he had told General Braddock, it was to acquaint the French of their enemy's approach. Ross Gilbert was double-faced. And if his treachery was not exposed, the whole army might fall into a trap of death and be blotted out of existence.

Sandy followed Gilbert until he saw him stop before a tent in which slept Zella Dupont, the daughter of the artillery captain. The boy saw him lean forward and listen to the soft but deep breathing of the sleeping girl. He (Sandy) had saved her from the claws of the panthereess on South Mountain. Could he keep her from falling into the clutches of this traitor, who, from his movements, had base designs against her?

He felt his blood rush hot through every vein while he watched the rascal at the little white tent. Moments seemed hours. Gilbert lingered, with the young ranger near by, ready to dart forward should the villain dare to part the curtains of Zella's tent. To Sandy's relief he did nothing of the kind, but at last slipped away.

If Sandy could have witnessed the meeting between Ross Gilbert and the wily Fox Tail, there would have been a startling scene, but this interview had been withheld from him.

He did not lose sight of the white man till he saw him seat himself at a smoldering fire, and presently prepare for slumber. Then the boy turned away and sped through the sleeping camp.

"Ralph! Ralph!" he cried, bending over a youth and plucking his sleeve.

Ralph Manning shook off his sleep and stared into Sandy's face.

"Villainy is afoot in the camp," continued Sandy. "I am more than ever convinced that Ross Gilbert is playing a double game."

Ralph was wide awake by this time.

"Tell me all!" he exclaimed.

Sandy did so from the moment of seeing Gilbert in Braddock's quarters to the preparations for bed.

"You must be right, boy," Ralph said, at the conclusion of the narrative. "This man is indeed a traitor. Will not General Braddock listen to you?"

"No, I am in disgrace, as you know, Ralph. He would put me under arrest if I were to go to him. He places the utmost confidence in this traitor, and if Ross Gilbert's plans are carried out, we are lost."

"Then what shall we do?"

"I must tell Colonel Washington," answered Sandy. "But first let us see if Ross Gilbert is where I left him."

The two boys moved quickly to where Sandy had last seen the suspected man. They halted within a few feet of the fire.

"There is where I left him," said the young ranger. "There is his blanket, Ralph. But look, look! Ross Gilbert is not under it!"

Ralph gave a little gasp, and, leaning forward, stared at the vacant spot. Ross Gilbert was gone!

CHAPTER VI.

AN ERRAND OF PERIL.

The boys looked at one another in unsuppressed amazement. The sudden disappearance was proof of Sandy's suspicions. Whither Ross Gilbert had gone they could not conjecture. Certain it was that his couch was vacant, and he had slipped away so noiselessly that his companions had not been disturbed.

The night had now reached its middle hours, and erelong the starry dial of the sky would point to morning.

"We must safeguard Miss Zella!" exclaimed Ralph, who was the first to speak. "This villain may have designs against her. If not, why did he listen at her tent? If General Braddock will not believe your accusations, we must depend on Colonel Washington to circumvent Ross Gilbert."

"My first duty in the morning shall be to see Washington," replied the young mountaineer, and with this they withdrew from the bivouac and vanished.

The next day, instead of going to the tent of the young Virginia colonel of his own free will, Sandy found himself summoned thither.

"I am going to take the responsibility of sending you on an important and dangerous mission, my boy," Washington said, when Sandy had presented himself. "I believe you once told me that you understood the Susquehanna tongue?"

"I can speak it quite well, my Colonel," was the prompt response. "An old Indian of that tribe who still inhabits the Catoctin Valley taught me his language, and I think I am clever at it."

"Which suits my purpose exactly," smiled Washington. "I want to know how it goes with our enemies about Fort Du Quesne. But I am not willing to send you away for this purpose unless you are willing to go."

"I am willing to do anything for the cause."

"Your wilderness experience will stand you in need, and your familiarity with the tongue will render you a pretty good Indian," and a smile wreathed Washington's lips.

"But the disguise?" queried the boy.

"My old ranger, Daniel Morgan, will see to that."

Two hours later there flitted through the forest a youth who would have been taken for an Indian. He had the very movements of the redmen, and his painted face and Indian dress were calculated to deceive the most suspicious. This young trailer was none other than Sandy of Catoctin. He carried on his shoulder a rifle not his own, for that weapon might lead to his unmasking, and with his face turned toward the old French fort, he sped from trail to trail with his keen eyes on the alert.

Fort Du Quesne was miles away, deep in the forests of the Monongahela. It was the most important post in French possession on the wild frontier, and was guarded by men who were ready to die in the service of their king. To the fort the French had drawn Indians of several tribes, and these wild men were waiting to strike the blow which would destroy the proud army which had crossed the mountains for their subjection.

Washington had been so eager to send Sandy upon his mission that the youth had not told him of the events of the preceding night, but he had shifted this duty to Ralph, who promised that as soon as he could get Washington's ear all should be known.

The long summer day was wearing to its close when Sandy came in sight of Fort Du Quesne. In front of it was a parade ground, and he beheld a detachment of French soldiers drilling under the command of Bajeau, one of the officers who afterward brought on the ill-fated battle.

It was a new and thrilling sight to the Maryland lad who had never before seen so many Frenchmen. He paused on a rise which overlooked the fort, and in silence drank in the scene.

Not far off stood a number of Indians who were watching the maneuvers, and Sandy singled out the redoubtable Fox Tail, the friend and confidant of Ross Gilbert.

It looked like descending into a death-trap to join the assemblage, but he had

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promised Washington that he would carry out his designs, and throwing fear to the winds, he advanced again. His appearance on the parade ground created no remark. Leaning against a tree, he continued to watch the troops, and nothing escaped eye or ear.

When the drill was ended, Captain Bajeau invited the Indians within the fort, and Sandy entered with the painted horde. For the first time he stood under the French flag, and as he looked at it his heart swelled with indignation, and he wondered if it was not soon to fall before the blazoned cross of St. George.

All at once Fox Tail was seen to dart away, and the next moment had disappeared in the forest. If the boy had suspected this redskin's mission, not even the wishes of Washington would have kept him in the fort, and perhaps it was well that he did not see the flying figure of the Susquehanna, as it shot from trail to trail with the fleetness of a deer.

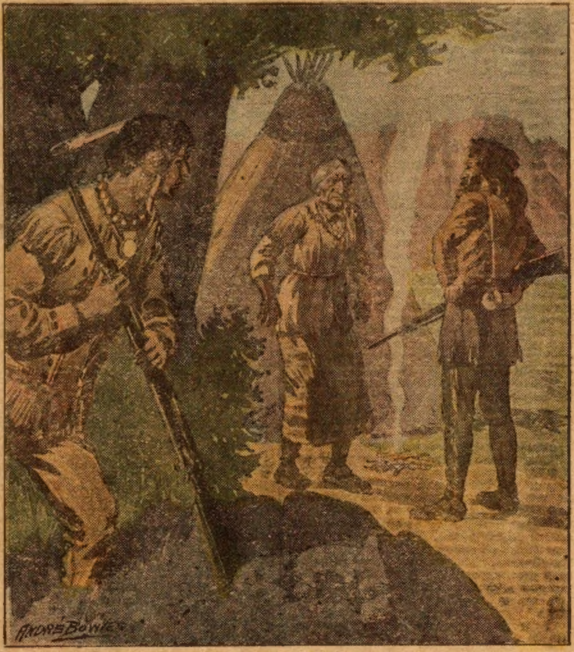
A laugh suddenly fell upon the young ranger's ears. He did not turn to see from whose lips it had fallen for there was to him but one laugh in all the world like that, and he knew that within a few feet of him stood Ross Gilbert, the traitor.

"We've got them in the trap!" cried this man. "They've crossed the water to find graves in the forests of North America."

"That they have, my dear Captain," answered another voice. "I've baited the trap with my own hands, and there is no escape for the red-coated General."

"Your Indians will fight, eh?"

"They are thirsting for the blood of the English. Not one shall escape, and the rifles of the provincials will avail nought. I shall post the redskins myself, and, of course, will be there to see them fight like the demons they are."



The terrible truth seemed to burst all at once upon Sandy.

"I shall assist them," answered Ross Gilbert. "It was the easiest thing in the world to hoodwink Braddock, who will take no advice. Why, he insults Colonel Washington whenever that young man offers it, and, but for his loyalty to the English king, the Virginian would take his men and go home."

This conversation made Sandy's blood tingle.

"I wish General Braddock were here," he thought to himself. "He would know that he has been trusting a red-handed villain, but he shall be told and put on his guard before it is too late."

As the day departed and night settled over the fort and its surroundings, the Indians set up a war dance which thrilled the young spy who found himself compelled to witness it. A pole was set up in the center of the parade ground, and the effigy of General Braddock was made fast to it. Then commenced one of the most horrible scenes Sandy had ever dreamt of.

The painted hordes danced about the effigy, now and then striking it with their tomahawks and scalping-knives and at last it was dragged from the pole and cast into a fire, amid yells of the most terrible description.

Thus they intended to serve the British general, and the boy drew off in horror, trembling at the awfulness of the wild ceremony.

"Good! good!" cried Ross Gilbert, coming up and clapping his hands. "Don't you think so, my young buck?"

The last words were addressed to Sandy, and when he looked up he saw the eyes of his old enemy fixed upon him.

"Good!" said he, in the Susquehanna tongue. "The Long Knife will roast at the stake."

"To be sure he will," laughed Gilbert. "Nothing can save the pompous fool in scarlet."

Fearful of being recognized by the sharp eyes of the renegade, Sandy turned his face away.

"You're a smart-looking young buck," continued the rascal. "Who is your father?"

"I am the son of Crippled Deer."

"Oho! You look like a fighter, by my soul you do," commented Gilbert, and the next moment, to Sandy's delight he trotted off and was lost in the crowd of savages.

All through the night the mad orgies of the Indians were kept up. Sandy watched them till he grew weary, and at last, feeling that he had carried out Washington's mission, he glided to the fringe of the red camp.

Now for home! Hours had passed since Fox Tail's departure, and more waned before Sandy was far from Du Quesne. Indeed, he was not very far from it when daylight overtook him in a lonely ravine, in the middle of which he caught sight of a wigwam, at the door of which was crouched an Indian hag over a fire.

Curiosity led the boy cautiously thither. She was a crone of repulsive appearance, and as she stirred the fire to roast the hunk of venison which was to be her breakfast, the young mountaineer watched her closely.

All at once there was a breaking of twigs to his right, and to Sandy's astonishment Ross Gilbert broke through the undergrowth. The old crone looked up and hailed him with a devilish grin.

"It's I, Nokomis!" cried the white man, as he came up. "I've come to wait for the white dove."

The words went through Sandy like a flight of arrows.

"Fox Tail not come yet," drawled the hag. "It is many walks to the red soldiers."

"But he will come," replied the traitor, "and he won't come empty-handed."

The terrible truth seemed to burst all at once upon Sandy's mind.

"I see it all now," he said to himself. "Fox Tail is coming with some one at the instigation of Ross Gilbert. Merciful Heavens! Has Zella fallen into that villain's snare?"

The boy crouched lower among the bushes and gripped his rifle. He forgot his mission; he thought no longer of hastening on and warning his beloved Washington. And as he watched the traitor, his hands itched to send a bullet through his brain.

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THIS YEAR.

It's a good world. The fact that you
Have had another year tacked to
Your age is nothing that should make
You grumble as if you'd an ache
In your old bones. This year will go
Much like the others. You may know
A bit of grief, but, if you do,
You're better for a tear or two.

We all are better for the tears
That we have known along the years;
For, having had our own, we know
The feeling of another's woe.
Grief makes a fellow's heart expand,
And makes him reach to clasp the hand
Of some poor fellow man when he's
All in and beaten to his knees.

But here will be the funny side
To things. The grins will be as wide
As last year's grins. Children will run
With their curls flying in the sun;
Roses will bloom and styles will change
This year to something new and strange
As just last year they changed, and you
Will get a useful grin or two.

If this year means an uphill climb
'Twill come just one day at a time;
A short day's climb, and then a rest
To gather strength to do your best
The next day. And each time that you
Smile you'll get back a smile or two.
And then, in each night's gathered gloam
Will shine the twinkling lights of home.

* * *

THE NEW YEAR GIFT.

Such a laughing and chattering of tongues as there was in Doctor Byrne's cozy and pleasant sitting-room.

"It was enough to drive a man distracted," as the good Doctor himself asserted, though he looked as if he enjoyed it as well as the youngest among the merry group that surrounded him, none of whom ever thought it necessary to put on a long countenance because "father had come."

Indeed this was always the signal for increased mirth and happiness.

The holidays were approaching, and the Doctor's four daughters were all discussing the important subject of Christmas and New Year gifts, and comparing notes as to the beautiful articles they had seen in the shop windows.

We said all, and yet there was one—a fair, sweet-looking girl, sitting apart from the rest—who did not join in this animated conversation, though evidently from no unfriendly motives.

This was Doctor Byrne's oldest and best-loved daughter, and he noticed her quiet mood.

"And what does Helen want for her New Year gift?"

The Doctor regretted the question as soon as it passed his lips.

Helen's quickly averted eyes filled with tears, her lips quivered, and after silently struggling for a few moments with her feelings, she arose and left the room.

As soon as the Doctor could do so unobserved, he followed her, going directly to her chamber, where he found Helen sobbing with an abandonment of grief that alarmed him.

"My daughter," he said, in a tone of tender reproach, "do not give way to your sorrow thus."

Helen lifted her head from her father's shoulder with a smile that was sadder even than tears.

"I know how ungrateful it must seem, papa, when I have so many blessings remaining. But I could not help thinking how he was here with us a year ago, so strong and full of life, and now——"

Here her sobs again choked her utterance.

The good doctor was strongly affected, for Robert Tracy had been as dear to him as a son.

"But, Helen, it is not certain that Robert went down with the ship——"

Here Doctor Byrne checked himself, too wise, as well as honest, to hold out false hope.

One morning, a few days later, Helen entered her father's study.

"Papa, would the present you spoke of buying me cost as much as fifty dollars?"

"Yes, my dear, all of that, certainly."

"Then would you as soon let me have the money instead?"

Doctor Byrne smiled.

"What idea have you in your busy brain now, Helen? Or is it that you are getting mercenary?"

A faint color came into the pale cheeks.

"It is not that, papa; but Widow Howe, who has the crippled boy, you know, thinks that she could support herself and children nicely if she had a sewing machine, and so——"

"I see! I see!" said the Doctor, taking out his pocketbook, and putting two fifty-dollar notes in Helen's hand. "There is no balm for such a wound as yours, my daughter, like that of ministering to the needs and alleviating the sorrows of others."

"So I begin to find, papa," said Helen, with a smile that lighted up her face with more than its old beauty.

The first day of the new year had dawned, and was near its close. It had been a very busy one for Helen, and a happy one, as well; for hers was one of those sweet and loving natures that find joy in the reflected happiness of others.

She had caused the widow's heart to "sing for joy," and this consciousness had brought into her own great peace.

All the younger members of the family had gone out to some entertainment. Helen had wanted to have a little talk with her father, but a stranger was with him, so the servant said, and with a lonely feeling in her heart, she went up to her own room.

Doctor Byrne came up almost immediately. There was a strange light in his eyes, and more than usual tenderness and solemnity in his manner, as he laid his hand on Helen's head.

"How is it with thee tonight, daughter?"

"It is well, father."

"After night, the morning; after winter, the spring. God is often kinder to use than we can even ask or think."

"He is very good, father."

Doctor Byrne drew his daughter's arm within his.

"Come into my study, Helen, and get your New Year gift. Because you have forgotten yourself in caring for others, did you think your old father was going to forget you?"

"Oh, no, papa; but you gave it to me, you remember, in money. I didn't expect anything—indeed, I don't think you ought to give me anything more."

"Well, my child, just come and look at it. If you don't want it, or would prefer its equivalent in money, you can tell me so."

With silent wonder in her heart, not unmingled with curiosity, Helen stood at the half-open study door.

The shaded light upon her father's desk revealed the faint outlines of a man who was standing near it, and who advanced eagerly toward her.

Helen looked up, bewildered, into the face of the man she had mourned as dead, and then, with a faint cry of joy, threw herself into the arms that had opened to receive her.

Doctor Byrne almost regretted his precipitancy as he looked upon his daughter's pale face. But joy does not often kill, and his fears were entirely dissipated when he returned to the room an hour later.

The good Doctor was fond of a joke.

"If your present doesn't suit you, Helen," he said, slyly, "I will try to exchange it, or give you its value in money—that is, if you don't rate the young man too high!"

Helen glanced smilingly from her lover's to her father's face.

"You are very kind papa, but I am very well satisfied with my New Year gift. As to receiving its value in money, not all that the whole world contains can give me what it is worth to me!"

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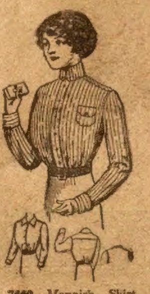

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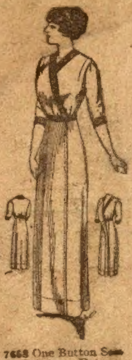

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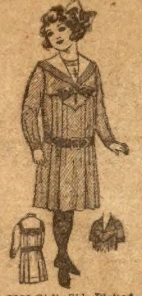

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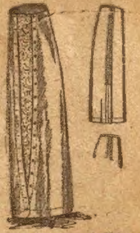

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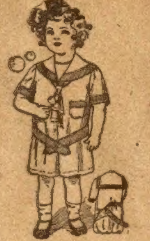

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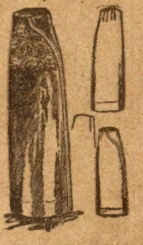

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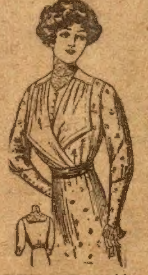

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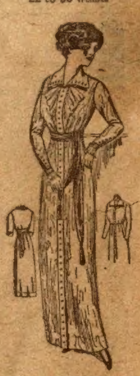

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THE FAIRY CORNER
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AT THE DOOR.

"We will watch the old year out tonight,
  And the new year in!" Ned cried.
Then three-year-old Baby Winnie
  Crept up to her mother's side,
And out from under her curly pate,
  Where queer little questions grow,
Came, "Mamma, how do ve new year's come?
  And where do ve old years go?"

And mamma, with a bright smile, told her:
  "My dear little Winnie-wee,
That is very hard to answer,
  You shall watch with us and see!"
And so when night drew the curtains
  Dark and snug upon every side,
Little Win climbed into her high-chair,
  Her blue eyes bright and wide.

But the minutes passed so slowly,
  With so many in an hour,
That long before it was over
  She felt the Sandman's power;
And two little fringed white curtains
  Were dropping low and lower,
When there came a timid summons
  Against the outer door.

She was wide awake that instant
  And gazing all around,
When once again she heard it,
  That gentle, asking sound.
Mamma knew 'twas Dog Rollo,
  Not so did Baby Win:
"Oh, mamma! hear ve New Year,
  A-scratchin' to det in!"

❧

A Strange Noise.

Little Marian was spending two weeks on a farm. It was the first time she had ever been in the country, and everything was very new and lovely to her. At first she felt lonely for her little friends, but that was before she met Captain Parsons, who lived next door. Perhaps she would never have met him if it had not been for his guinea-hen. The first night they were at the farm, and while Marian was going to bed, they heard a strange noise. It did not sound like a crow, nor a hawk, nor a hen, yet it reminded them of all three. They knew it was made by some kind of bird, and the strange noise kept up for such a long time that it was the last thing Marian heard before going to sleep, and the first thing she heard in the morning was the same noise.

"Do you suppose that hen has been singing all night, mother?" said Marian. Her mother laughed, and said, "No, dear. After you went to sleep I decided it must be a guinea-hen, and probably it makes that noise night and morning."

After breakfast Marian and her mother started down the road, and they saw a very pleasant-looking gentleman sitting with his chair tipped back against the next house. He seemed very glad to see them, and said that he liked little children, and hoped they would come often. He invited them to see his hens and chickens, and showed them the pasture, where there were many sheep and little lambs. He took them over his flower gardens and pointed out all his favorite flowers and told Marian their names. Last of all, they were shown the splendid beehives.

The visit was so pleasant that they almost forgot to ask about the very thing they came for. "Please tell us about that queer noise we heard last night," said Marian.

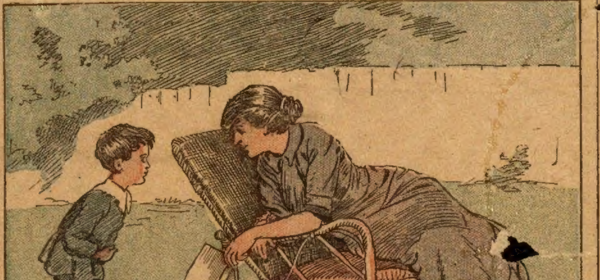
"Oh, you must have heard my guinea. I hope you were not disturbed," said the Captain.

"Oh, no indeed; nothing keeps us awake," replied Marian's mother.

"Well, you see, guinea is a great favorite of mine. He belonged to a friend of mine whose wife would not have him around because he made so much noise. He never stays with the rest of the hens, but wanders off by himself. I think he's rather proud. He would not think of going to roost with the hens, but he has to go away up to the top of that tree when he goes to bed. You see, he feels important, and thinks he has the rest of the henyard in his care.

"The first spring after we had guinea I had a lot of fine little chickens, which I thought were safe enough, as I had a strong wire fence around their house. One night I woke up and thought I heard some one shouting, 'What's that? What's that? What's that?' But when I was really wide-awake I found that it was only my old guinea.

"Guinea kept up the noise so long that at last I put my head out of the window to shout at him. What should I see but some little creature in the henyard! I ran downstairs and found that some animal had killed six of my fine little chickens. You see, he must have had good ears," said the old Captain, laughing and looking at Marian, "for away up in that tree he hea
going on before the henyard w
Ever since that night when guinea
what sounds like 'What's that?
that?' perhaps some hen is not o
roost where she should be, or the
some unusual noise in the yard."



"Has your pain gone now, darling?"
"I can f-feel pieces of it when I go like this."

❧

Tot Wit.

One evening little 3-year-old Mildre
saw the new moon for the first time
"Oh, mamma," she exclaimed, "see the angel's finger nail in the sky!"

—

"What letter is this, Elmer?" asked the teacher, pointing to the letter Q.

"That," answered the little fellow, "is O before its tail is cut off."

—

"Our Sunday school teacher doesn't know very much," said small Harold.

"Why, how do you know?" asked his mother.

"She said if I told a story the bad man would get me," said Harold. "I tried it twice and he hasn't got me yet."

—

"Mamma," queried little Dorothy, "who was papa before he married into our family?"

"Why," replied the astonished mother, "he was the same man he is now."

"Yes," continued the small investigator, "but was he related to us, or was he just one of your mashes?"

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call for me in his aeroplane?
Mamma—"Oh, I think so, de
been hanging around the skyligh
club all afternoon."

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